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A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.,

BEGARDING PORTIONS OF HIS

MIDLOTHIAN SPEECHES.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. SIR BARTLE FRERE, BART.,

G.C.B., G.C.S.I., F.R.S., ETC.

WITH A LETTER TO THE LATE SIR JOHN KAYE,  
AND OTHER PAPERS.

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TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

SIR,

In the course of a political tour in Scotland in 1879 you introduced my name in some of your many speeches as one of the principal instigators of a foreign policy, which you denounced as wicked and aggressive, as depraving the morality, and ruining the finances, of England.

These speeches, I need hardly say, produced an immense effect on public opinion, both in England and in the distant Colony where I was then on duty.

It was impossible for me to make, at the time, any effectual reply to what was so said. It was nearly a month before the report of the speeches made in Midlothian could reach the Colony—another month before any answer could be received in England, even by return of post. Large numbers of my countrymen had consequently, in reliance on your testimony, condemned me, and all I had done or proposed to do, in South Africa, before I could be heard in my own defence; and I was recalled from South Africa at a very critical period in the fortunes of its Colonies.

To the personal results to myself I have no intention to refer; but I believe that the statements and opinions to which those speeches gave currency and authority, caused, and are still causing, infinite mischief in South Africa. They have retarded the prosperity and progress of the European Colonies in that region, they have laid the foundation of wars; and raised very serious obstacles to the religious, moral, and political advancement of the native races. On my return to England, I find the old calumnies and misrepresentations of fact and opinion, to which those utterances gave currency, constantly recalled and used by your political followers to the prejudice of the interests, and the ruin of the prosperity, of a region which might otherwise become a southern home of men of European races, discharging a great duty<sup>†</sup> in civilizing and



raising in the scale of humanity the millions of natives of Africa, who for many ages past have never known what permanent peace and civilization might mean. Such misrepresentations, which I would gladly believe were the result of want of knowledge of actual facts, and not a wilful distortion of them, affect necessarily not only the past history but the future of those important Colonies.

I deem it, therefore, a duty I owe to the people whose best interests are at stake, to show how unfounded are some, and how distorted are all, the charges brought against me, on your authority, of ever having advocated an unjust or aggressive policy towards our neighbours or an oppressive policy towards our own subjects, and no doubt you would yourself be the first frankly to acknowledge this—did you know the facts as I know them.

I hope in time to show that, both in Afghanistan and Africa, the advice I gave, and the action I took, was the only advice and the only action compatible with my duty to my country and my Sovereign. I confine myself, however, for the present, to endeavouring to show in the Note of which I take the liberty to enclose a copy, that my views and advice regarding the course to be pursued both in Afghanistan and South Africa have been very gravely misrepresented.

I cannot hope that, whilst weighted with the cares of the whole nation, you will have time to consider whether there was ever any just ground for the attacks on any character I may have had for justice, humanity, or intelligent devotion to public duty; but a time may come when you may have leisure to think on these things; and I may at least have put it in the power of those who come after us to judge whether I have been justly included amongst those who, in these latter days, have brought ruin and disgrace on regions in which it has been my duty and my pride for forty-six years to serve my country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*Digitized by Microsoft* H. B. E. FRERE.

*Athenæum Club, July, 1881.*



## NOTE

INCLOSED IN LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

In November and December of 1879, Mr. Gladstone, then on a political progress through Scotland, named me in some of his public addresses as one of the authors of what he denounced as an unjust, unnecessary and aggressive war in Afghanistan; and the charges thus vouched by his high authority were used for the double purpose of implicating me in the alleged guilt of the Afghan war, and of thus destroying the weight of any arguments I might use to defend my action in South Africa.

I was then engaged in very arduous public duties in the other hemisphere. It was several weeks before I was even aware of, and several more before I could reply to, Mr. Gladstone's charges; very few of the documents relating to the transactions to which he referred were then accessible to me, and the charges were ingrained in the belief, not only of his supporters, but also of many thousands of others my countrymen, before I could have a chance of replying to them.

I nevertheless felt it my duty to take the earliest opportunity in my power to address Her Majesty's Government on the subject of Mr. Gladstone's strictures; and on the 13th of January, 1880, I forwarded officially to the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, for such use as he might see fit to make of them, a Memorandum I had drawn up after reading in the newspapers extracts from speeches Mr. Gladstone had delivered in Scotland.

Not having the reports of his speeches in full, at hand, I specially quoted from the 'Cape Mercantile Advertiser,' a Colonial newspaper, of the 7th of January, 1880, the following among other extracts. After summarizing one of Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches, the 'Advertiser' said:—

"That is rather strong language to use against political opponents, but there was more of it later on. The foreign policy of the Government was 'pestilent activity; no democrat, no agitator, could thus degrade the principles of free government.' Forcing Shere Ali to receive a Resident at Cabul had sent him 'in sorrow to his grave.' (The Ameer died of an internal disease, which the doctor to the Russian Embassy could not cure or eradicate.) 'In Africa we had the record of



“ ‘ 10,000 Zulus slain for no other offence than their attempt to  
 “ ‘ defend their hearths and homes, their wives and their children.’  
 “ ‘ Afghanistan is ruined, and Shere Ali ‘ never gave us the  
 “ ‘ slightest cause for mistrust of his intentions. There are two  
 “ ‘ gentlemen of distinguished names who supported an Indian  
 “ ‘ policy of advance in Afghanistan. Who are they? Sir  
 “ ‘ Henry Rawlinson and Sir Bartle Frere—those were the two  
 “ ‘ great authorities. Sir Henry Rawlinson was, I believe, a  
 “ ‘ distinguished Officer. He is a scientific man, a man of high  
 “ ‘ character and great ability. Sir Bartle Frere, except that I  
 “ ‘ believe he is entirely a civilian, deserves the ascription to  
 “ ‘ him of all those qualities in the highest degree; but neither  
 “ ‘ the one nor the other gentleman has ever been in a position  
 “ ‘ of responsibility; neither one nor the other has ever imbibed  
 “ ‘ from actual acquaintance with British institutions the spirit  
 “ ‘ by which British government ought to be regulated and  
 “ ‘ controlled. That they are men of benevolence I do not  
 “ ‘ doubt, but I am afraid they are gentlemen who are apt,  
 “ ‘ in giving scope to their benevolent motives, to take into  
 “ ‘ their own hands the choice of means in a manner those who  
 “ ‘ are conversant with free government and with a responsible  
 “ ‘ government never dream of. Sir Bartle Frere’s mode of  
 “ ‘ action at the Cape of Good Hope does not tend to accredit  
 “ ‘ his advice in Afghanistan now.’ ” \*

I would observe in passing that opinions may differ as to what is “a position of responsibility.” It is now many years since on Sir Henry Rawlinson were laid the gravest responsibilities for the safety of General Sir William Nott’s army and for the maintenance of our rule at Candahar. From that time

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\* I find the following in the authorized edition of “Mr. Gladstone’s Political Speeches in Scotland,” Nov. and Dec. 1879, revised by the Author. London: Ridgway. 1879:—

P. 49. After denouncing the Annexation of the Transvaal and the Zulu War, Mr. Gladstone said: “Sir Bartle Frere, who was the great authority for the proceedings of the Government in Afghanistan, has announced in South Africa that it will be necessary for us to extend our dominions until we reach the Portuguese frontier to the north.”

Ibid. “We have assumed, jointly with France, the virtual Government of Egypt, and as we are to extend, says Sir Bartle Frere, our southern dominions in Africa till we meet the southern frontier of the Portuguese, possibly one of these days we may extend our northern dominions in Africa till we meet the northern frontier of the Portuguese.”

Ibid. p. 205. After a vehement denunciation of the Afghan War, Mr. Gladstone said: “There were two gentlemen, men of distinguished names, who supported the Indian policy of advance into Afghanistan—who were they? Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir Bartle Frere. These were the two great authorities. Sir Henry Rawlinson was, I believe,” and so on, almost verbatim as given in the extract in the *Cape Mercantile Advertiser*.



to this his duties have always been among the most responsible on which an Indian Diplomatist can be employed.

In my own case, after several years service in sole charge of the province of Sattara, I was for some nine years in charge of Sind and of our frontier relations on that Border, including the years of the Indian Mutiny. I should hardly have had the honour of twice receiving the thanks of Parliament, had not my position there been considered one of responsibility. The appointments I have subsequently held as Member of Lord Canning's Council (1859 to 1862), as Governor of Bombay (1862 to 1867), and as Member of the Indian Council (1867 to 1877) were then generally regarded as positions of considerable responsibility.

The English rule in India rests on public opinion. On the general conviction of the vast masses of the population that the English are not only far stronger, but more just, more merciful, more careful of prescriptive rights than any other possible competitors for rule.

It is hardly possible to have had much share, during a whole lifetime, in maintaining an Empire resting on such convictions, without becoming sensitive to popular feeling—to the “inarticulate voice” of the people ruled, to their wants and wishes expressed or unexpressed—in a degree not always possible to those who are more accustomed to obey the varying but always loudly expressed demands of party feeling in this country.

Hence I venture to claim, not merely for Sir Henry Rawlinson and myself, but for all Indian officials who have efficiently filled such offices of responsibility, no lack of training to understand the popular will—and when such training is joined to ordinary honesty, courage, and loyalty to national interests, I cannot think there can be any incapacity to comprehend “the spirit by which British Government ought to be regulated and controlled”—either in England or in distant dependencies.

The following is the Memorandum which was enclosed in my despatch of the 13th January, and received by the Secretary of State on the 6th of February, 1880:—

MEMORANDUM enclosed in CAPE OF GOOD HOPE DESPATCH,  
No. 9.

“I annex an extract taken by a Cape newspaper from the London ‘Times’ of the 6th December, reporting a speech of Mr. Gladstone’s at Glasgow, attributing to me a large share of the blame for the Afghan war, and denouncing the Zulu war as proving my incapacity to understand the principles of free and responsible government.



“To what extent I may be responsible for our dealing with Afghanistan I will not now discuss. I only ask Mr. Gladstone, before he attempts to fix on an absent man any share of the responsibility for such a heinous crime as he considers the advance into Afghanistan to be, that he will take the trouble to inquire what I have said upon the subject, and when, and to whom?

“He will then find that for close on a quarter of a century I have persistently urged on the Government of India, and, through it, on the Government of England, presided over for a great portion of that time by Mr. Gladstone himself, the only policy which, as later events have shown, could have *prevented* the necessity for any military advance into Afghanistan.

“When Lord Canning was Viceroy of India, an opportunity offered for restoring more friendly relations with the Afghans, in consequence of messages brought from the Sirdar of Herat by Sir Lewis (then Captain) Pelly, and from other quarters, seeking friendship and alliance.

“I was then senior member of Lord Canning’s Council, and pressed as strongly as I could on the Viceroy, and not for the first time, that advantage should be taken of these and other similar expressions of Afghan good-will to restore more cordial relations with the Afghan Government and Sirdars. We had then an opportunity of establishing ourselves as allies of the Afghans, with common interests in all matters affecting the other great Asiatic Powers, and I urged our taking advantage of that opportunity, as the surest mode of avoiding misunderstandings, and consequent hostile positions, which seemed to me otherwise inevitable.

“This view, which I believe commended itself to Lord Canning’s own judgment, was discussed with those who had been in the Punjab for some years previous, and who had been directly responsible for the conduct of our intercourse, such as it was, with the Afghans. It was, I believe, laid before Her Majesty’s Government in England, of which, Mr. Gladstone was then, I think, a member.

“The result was the expression to Lord Canning of a very strong opinion\* that we should have as few relations as possible, whether friendly or otherwise, with the Afghans; that we should neither invite nor accept any overtures which might lead to closer intercourse; that we should have as little as possible to do with them, either as friends or foes; that we should in fact, as far as we could, ignore their existence.

“The discussion of the question, in fact, ripened and formu-

\* *i.e.* of the English Cabinet.



lated that doctrine of cold apparent indifference to the Afghans and their interests which, with the too brief interval of Lord Mayo's viceroyalty, has till lately been acted on by our Government in its relations with the Afghans, and which Mr. Gladstone, then and now, has, I believe, cordially approved.

“ I have always, to the best of my power, in the interests of peace, ventured to combat that doctrine, believing that there were no better guarantees for peace, than cordial and intimate relations with one's near and weaker neighbours, impressing on them the conviction that we were content with our own, and had no wish to use our superior power for any purpose inimical to others. I have always held that a contrary course of isolation, turning our backs on them and disregarding their wishes, might for a time seem to avoid the entanglements of neighbourly dealing, but in the long run must naturally and inevitably alienate one's neighbours; and, in Afghanistan, under existing circumstances, throw them on other neighbouring powers, whose interests might, and probably would be the opposite of ours.

“ It seemed to me that the time must come when we should be rudely awakened from our dream of fancied security, and should be driven to seek the friendship and alliance of our neighbours, obviously then only for selfish purposes of our own. Success would then be hollow and precarious, and failure would probably involve war, hurriedly undertaken, certainly costly, and possibly imperfect in its results.

“ Whether I was right or wrong in these my anticipations I leave to be judged from the history of the past three years, during which I have had nothing to say to the conduct of Eastern affairs.

“ I would only beg Mr. Gladstone to remember that the advance into Afghanistan, which I had recommended for so many years in vain to his and to other Governments, till it was too late to take my advice, was advance as a friend and good neighbour, anxious to cultivate friendly relations and prevent war, conscious of superior power and resources, but desirous to use them as much in the interests of peace and for the benefit of our neighbours as of ourselves.

“ Hostile advances could then only become necessary in self-defence, and after the repulsion of such friendly overtures.

“ Mr. Gladstone will hardly join with men of the ‘iron and blood’ school in denouncing such views as benevolent dreams; but, unless he does, I should like to know what third course he thinks was open to us? Does he still think that, if we had gone on shutting our eyes and turning our backs



on the Afghans, we should have improved their feeling towards us, or kept the Russians further from the Indus?

“ Mr. Gladstone’s own colleagues, Viceroy of India, and the Secretaries of State for India in Liberal Ministries, and my own colleagues, their councillors, will bear me witness that I have never ceased to warn Her Majesty’s Government that the inevitable consequences of the policy of neglect and turning the cold shoulder towards Afghanistan must some day be panic, and probably sudden war, when the English nation felt that they had been deluded by promises of peace where there was no peace.

“ This warning of mine, that war must inevitably follow an Afghan policy which told the Afghans we did not care for them, that we did not intend to be enemies, but did not wish to be intimate friends, that, in fact, we would have nothing to do with them, cannot, I submit, by any ingenuity, be tortured into a suggestion of a hostile advance into Afghanistan. The certainty seemed to me as inevitable as the sequence of night and day; and I am no more responsible for the Afghan war than the person who asserts that night and day must follow each other is for the existence of light or darkness.

“ To me the policy of neglect, approved by Mr. Gladstone’s Government, has always seemed the immediate and main cause of the present Afghan war.

“ How far Mr. Gladstone or his colleagues are responsible for that policy must be left to him and them to decide.

“ There are obvious reasons why I cannot at present follow Mr. Gladstone throughout his denunciations of the Zulu war.

“ I have no doubt that in the cloud of contradictory and incorrect statements which has been sent home on the subject, by those who ought to know better, Mr. Gladstone may find some justification for what he states as facts; but I would ask him, before he uses his facts as foundations for a charge of blood-guiltiness against me, or any other absent man, to take the trouble to verify them, and ponder these few, which I believe to be unquestionable facts:—

“ (1.) That the numbers and force of the Zulu army have been proved by inexorable facts to have been greater, and their organization more perfect than my highest official estimate before Lord Chelmsford’s first advance.

“ (2.) That in the judgment of all military authorities, both before the war and since, it was absolutely impossible for Lord Chelmsford’s force, acting on the defensive, within the Natal boundary, to prevent a Zulu impi from entering Natal, and repeating the same indis-



criminate slaughter of all ages and sexes which they boast of having effected in Natal, at Blaauw-Krantz and Weenen, in Dingaan's other massacres of forty years ago, and in the inroads into the Transvaal territory made by Umbellini, with Cetywayo's connivance, within the last two years.

"No competent judge, as far as I can learn, now doubts Cetywayo's *power* to have inflicted even more atrocious damage on Natal in the year just passed, than he and his uncle had inflicted before, by the hands of men many of whom are still living and active members of the late Zulu army.

"These facts seem to me to prove that I did not over-estimate the Zulu danger; let me add a few words in answer to the countercharge of rashness, in that I under-estimated it, and allowed Lord Chelmsford to attempt the task with an insufficient force.

"In answer to this, I will only ask Mr. Gladstone to ponder one more unquestionable fact. An unexpected disaster, caused in Lord Chelmsford's absence by disregard of his orders, entailed a delay of five months and serious discouragement to us, and added enormously to the military prestige of the enemy.

"Nevertheless, as soon as he was enabled to resume the offensive, Lord Chelmsford, moving on the same line as that he first adopted, in eight marches from the scene of the former disaster, with a column of about 6000 Europeans, completely defeated the Zulu army and annihilated their military system.

"Will any one, with this unquestionable fact before him, say I was rash in what I asked Lord Chelmsford to attempt in January with about 6600 English soldiers, commanded by officers like Wood and Redvers Buller, Pearson and Glyn?

"But it is said by some people, 'Cetywayo did not intend to use his army for purposes of war;' others say, 'The war might have been postponed.'

"Few, probably, now go so far as to maintain that Cetywayo 'kept up his army in the interests of peace.' He had formally and repeatedly announced his desire to shed blood, and there was no one within reach, beyond his own dominions, whose blood he could shed, save English subjects or their protected allies.

"He had enrolled every able-bodied male in his kingdom into his army, and trained that army into a most perfect machine of destruction.

"Would Mr. Gladstone believe any civilized monarch on the earth, if he said that such a universal enrolment and training of the whole male population was not intended to be used for any military purpose?

"If he would not believe such assertion made by an European



Emperor, how can he attach any weight to it when volunteered, not by, but for, a barbarian Chief, whose own boast is that he acknowledges no superior, and that unrestrained power to shed blood is a national necessity, without which the Zulus could not exist as a nation. One of the falsehoods, so incessantly repeated that Mr. Gladstone appears to have accepted it, and refers to it as a fact, is that Cetywayo committed no overt act of hostility on us before we invaded his territory, that we made war on him, not he on us.

“This is not true, even if we restrict ourselves to Natal; unless Mr. Gladstone accepts, as evidence of friendly intent, and as sufficient satisfaction for two successive armed violations of British territory by armed bands, Cetywayo’s refusal of our demands in the case of the two murdered refugees.

“But it is yet more untrue as regards British territory in the Transvaal. Two successive *impis* are recorded as having invaded British Transvaal territory, beyond the Pongolo, in the neighbourhood of Luneberg, between Sir Theophilus Shepstone’s conference and Lord Chelmsford’s first advance.\* In the course of these inroads, every man, woman, and child who was not murdered (and, in two cases, burned alive in their huts), was carried off into slavery in Zululand. That these inroads were made into British territory (though the British subjects were natives and not Englishmen), from Zululand, by Chiefs under Cetywayo’s orders, before Lord Chelmsford’s first advance, are all, I believe, indubitable facts, clearly stated in official Blue Books, nowhere, as far as I know, contradicted, and, I believe, beyond all doubt true. But unless it can be shown that such acts never occurred, I would ask who was the aggressor? who actually commenced the war by committing acts which, if no satisfaction be given for them, are acts of war?” I have always maintained it was not we who made war on Cetywayo, but he who made war on us; and that Lord Chelmsford’s first advance was preceded by acts of the Zulus, which, unless atoned for, were unquestionable acts of hostility and virtual declarations of war.

“But it is said, with somewhat more show of reason, that ‘though war was inevitable, it might have been postponed.’ I would ask, till when?

“There is a period of the year when the Tugela is in flood, and the invasion of Natal is so dangerous that the most determined ‘*impis*’ hesitate to attempt it.

“This was the time chosen to make our demands on Cetywayo for reparation for the past and security for the future. There is another time of the year when the Tugela is every-

\* *i.e.* during the year 1878.



where fordable, and it is impossible for an army many times the size of Lord Chelmsford's force to prevent an invasion of Natal. Would it have been justifiable to postpone the demands till that season arrived?

"It seems to me that, after all, the main and only important question is, were the demands at all justifiable? and I will consider only the first, because it is, as Cetywayo himself now says, the only one which was ever seriously considered by him or his council.

"Ought Sir Henry Bulwer, in August, to have demanded the surrender for trial of two young men charged with having, on two separate occasions, taken large bodies of armed men into Natal, and with having forcibly taken away two refugees from British territory into Zululand, and there murdered them?

"Ought he, after an interval of months, to have repeated that demand? Ought he to have declined the blood-money offered, at 25*l.* per head, for the murdered refugees? Ought I, after this, and after five months had passed without the offenders being given up, to have considered the refusal as a declaration of hostility and entrusted the enforcement of the demand to the General and his army?

"Unless all these questions can be answered in the negative, it is difficult to see how the war could have been postponed, and unless they are answered in the negative, what other course was open? Can it be said that no such demand should have been made, nor, when made, that it should not have been enforced?

"Should the Zulus have been virtually told that they might, when they pleased, repeat the outrage? and if they might enter British territory and take away two human beings to kill them, why not any greater number?

"Why not give Cetywayo tacitly free leave to 'wash his young men's spears' in the blood of as many of our subjects as he thought necessary or convenient?

"After the way he has publicly and repeatedly held me up to the condemnation of all just and humane Englishmen for my conduct in this matter, I think I am entitled to ask Mr. Gladstone to state, distinctly, what he would have had me or Sir Henry Bulwer do under the circumstances?

"He is reported to have said that I have never 'been in a position of responsibility, never imbibed, from actual acquaintance with British institutions, the spirit by which English government ought to be regulated and controlled.'

"I regret that the forty-five years of my public service have been, for the most part, in lands less favourable for studying the institutions of our native country than those Mr. Gladstone has



inhabited ; but I can assure him that absence has not deadened my English instincts, nor I trust put me out of sympathy with the general feeling of my countrymen.

“ I still believe that, by a right older than Magna Charta, every British subject, and every stranger in a British subject's home, be it hut or palace, in whatever part of the world, is entitled to live as securely as in England, with the assurance that every Englishman, be he Governor, soldier, or taxpayer, will do his best, in his own calling, to prevent an armed foreign force carrying such subject out of the realm, and there murdering him or her.

“ Such, and no more, was what I endeavoured to secure for the inhabitants, black as well as white, of these British colonies.

“ I still believe that there is no law which would permit me to accept 25*l.*, or any other sum, as composition for the abduction, with a view to murder, of any one on British soil. I believe that my countrymen would have justly disowned me, as unworthy the name of Englishman, had they believed that I advised the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal to accept that, or any other sum, as a bribe to blind the eyes of my countrymen to what had been done, or on any grounds to palliate the outrage.

“ If in these beliefs I mistook the ‘spirit by which English government ought to be regulated and controlled,’ I would respectfully, but very earnestly, beg Mr. Gladstone, of his fuller knowledge, to tell me what he thinks we ought to have done?

“ I cannot but believe that, when the Queen's Government gave me a commission charging me ‘to take all such measures, ‘and to do all such matters and things as can and may lawfully ‘and discreetly be done by you for preventing the recurrence of ‘any irruption into our said possessions of the tribes inhabiting ‘the territories aforesaid, and for maintaining our said possessions in peace and safety, and for promoting, as far as may be ‘possible, the good order, civilization, and moral and religious ‘instruction of the tribes aforesaid, and, with that view, for ‘placing them under some settled form of government,’ the words meant what, in the ordinary meaning of the English language, they seem to convey, and that it was my duty to act accordingly. If Mr. Gladstone's ‘actual acquaintance with British institutions,’ leads him to think differently, will he say what else could have been done, under the circumstances, than to call on the British General to use the force at his disposal, to the best of his skill, to protect the lives and property of British subjects?

“ I have spoken hitherto only of the immediate causes of the Zulu war ; but if we look for causes as far back as Mr. Glad-



stone has looked, in attributing to me a large share of what he considers the guilt of the Afghan war, he may find that he himself, and those who have acted with and under him in former English administrations, have had more to do in the causing the Zulu war than I, or any of the just, humane, and patriotic men who are included, by implication, in his reckless charges against me of blood-guiltiness.

“The true causes of the Zulu, as of the Afghan war, are neglect of neighbourly duties and responsibilities, incumbent on a rich, civilized and powerful nation, towards poor barbarous tribes on its borders. We have allowed a noble people, capable of rapid and permanent advancement in civilization, to grow in numbers, whilst they festered in barbarism, till they became a serious danger to us. We have shut our eyes and turned our backs on their wants and defects, left them as much as possible to themselves, endeavoured to see and know as little of them, and to let them see and know as little of us as was possible, and then we are surprised to find that they have grown into a danger, only to be averted by war.

“It is not thus we have dealt in India with Bhils and Sonthals, and many other tribes, who, fifty years ago, were as wild and barbarous as Zulus, and who are now industrious and useful subjects of the British Government.

“When Mr. Gladstone taunts me with ignorance of British institutions, and consequent incapacity to understand the ‘spirit by which English government ought to be controlled,’ he might at least have credited me with some practical acquaintance with the modes of converting such lawless savages into peaceable and industrious subjects, which have been successfully practised by Englishmen in India, acting on strictly English principles.

“It is not by acting on the principles of Cain, nor by following the practice of the cautious Priest and selfish Levite, fearing to increase their responsibilities by helping their senseless and wounded neighbour, that these results have been effected in India. They have been attained by acting between one race and another, on the same principles on which Mr. Gladstone would act between man and man. He speaks contemptuously of me as one of those men who, ‘in giving scope to their benevolent motives, are apt to take into their own hands the choice of means in a manner those who are conversant with free government, and with responsible government, never dream of.’ I would ask him, not in excuse for past wars, but as a safeguard against their recurrence, where he would draw the line in acting, as a statesman, on the principles which ought to guide the individual in his personal relations? He will not, either as statesman or as a



private person, hold Dives guiltless, if Lazarus starves at his gate in the furthest province of the realm; his sympathies, as a legislator, as well as an individual Englishman, are actively expressed in teaching and reclaiming the city Arab, in protecting the overworked factory child, or the struggling agricultural peasant, hundreds of miles from his hall door. Will he defend a selfish policy of isolation from our Zulu neighbours and neglect of their improvement?

“ Yet such has been our policy in times past, upheld and inculcated by Mr. Gladstone’s colleagues.

“ It has caused many Kaffir wars. It must cause many more, if persevered in.

“ These are my convictions, after a very careful study of all the facts I can learn bearing on these questions.

“ I will not follow an evil example, by trying to impute to any man the guilt of results in producing which he has been, or may be, but a link in a chain of causes.

“ I would only warn Mr. Gladstone that, without careful and laborious search, it is peculiarly difficult to arrive at the truth in questions like the present, in South Africa or anywhere else; and that, if he will undertake that labour, I am convinced he will be unable to disprove any of the facts which I have stated; and that, if proved, those facts will satisfy any reasonable man that the High Commissioner who entrusted to Lord Chelmsford the enforcement of demands which led to the Zulu war has less to answer for, in causing that war, than the statesmen and administrators who, since Natal was a colony, have permitted the Zulus, a race by nature peaceable and teachable, to become the instruments of a cruel despotism, and to grow, once more, into a formidable danger to their neighbours.

“ H. B. E. FRERE.

“ *Government House, Cape Town,*  
“ *13th January, 1880.*”

At the time when the above Memorandum was written, and at such a distance from England as I then was, I did not think it compatible with my duty to Her Majesty’s Government to do otherwise than state my sense of the injustice of the attacks made on me, and leave the matter in their hands to publish, or communicate to Mr. Gladstone, what I had written or not, as they thought best for the public service.

In reply, I was informed that Her Majesty’s Government, after due consideration, did not think it necessary to make any communication to Mr. Gladstone, and there the matter rested till I was recalled.



On my return to England last autumn I had better opportunities than when in South Africa of consulting the records of what I had actually said or written on the subject of our relations with Afghanistan, during my service in India and in the Indian Council. I found that there was a great mass of despatches written whilst I was for nine years, from 1850 to 1859, Commissioner in Sind, in charge of our political relations with Beloochistan and much of southern Afghanistan, including the chief trade routes to Candahar and Herat. But the more important opinions I had then given were fairly epitomized in a letter subsequently written on the subject to the late Sir John Kaye, when I was a member of the Indian Council in 1874 and 1875, and he was Secretary in the Political Department. Sir John Kaye was a personal friend of mine, in many of his political views I very cordially concurred, and, to the best of my recollection the cause of my writing to him was a conversation we had on the grave aspect of Afghan affairs in June 1874. He asked me to put in writing what I had orally stated to him. I did as he requested, and expressed my opinions in a letter to him dated the 12th of June, 1874, which he deemed of sufficient importance to have printed for the perusal of the Secretary of State and Political Committee and other Members of the Indian Council.

The subject being of great importance, a copy of this letter was shown, either by the Secretary of State or by some friend in Council, I know not which, to the late Lord Lawrence, whose opinions were known not to agree with those I held on the subject. This elicited from him a Memorandum, dated the 4th of November, 1874, to which I wrote a reply on the 11th of January, 1875.

These papers belonged to a very large class of opinions given and recorded by Members of the Indian Council, for the use and information of the Secretary of State for India and his Council. They were not regarded as strictly official papers, but were absolutely at the disposal of the Secretary of State.

I was in South Africa when, without any previous reference to me, my letter to Sir John Kaye, of the 12th of June, 1874, was published in the London 'Times' of the 17th of October, 1878, and it was followed, at intervals of a few days, by the late Lord Lawrence's Memorandum of the 4th of November, 1874, and my rejoinder of the 11th of January, 1875, which appeared in the 'Times' of 14th November, 1878.

I see nothing in the opinions expressed in the papers I then wrote to withdraw or alter. Portions of the papers were omitted in the 'Times' reprint. These are now supplied in the papers printed at the end of this Note.



I will not epitomise my letter to Sir John Kaye, nor Lord Lawrence's Memorandum in reply, nor my answer pointing out in what he had misunderstood my views. I have no wish to reopen the question, but simply to put on record what were the opinions I really expressed at that time and have always maintained, and I would ask that what I wrote may be read and fairly judged by any one who cares to know whether I ever advocated a war of aggression on the Afghans, or in any other way said, or wrote, or did anything to justify the imputations of advocating such a war—whether, on the contrary, it is not true that in 1874 I advocated, as I had always done, the only policy which could have honourably and safely prevented such a war?

Looking at what I then wrote by the light of subsequent events, it seems to me that I was not far wrong in my anticipations of what must happen, if the cold, unneighbourly, and distrustful course, which we had then been for some time following in Asia, were persevered in. Whether I was right in my judgment of the causes which had alienated the Afghan powers—whether those causes admitted of being removed—whether at the time I wrote in 1874 a change of tone reverting to that frank, just, and neighbourly treatment which had been adopted by Lord Mayo, would have mended matters;—these and many other questions may be matters of speculation and opinion. But I may safely challenge any one to produce a word from what I wrote, then or at any other time, which justifies Mr. Gladstone's charge that I instigated the advance into Afghanistan, which took place four years after I wrote.

Of the specific measures which I did recommend in 1874, it is observable that the most important have been since carried out or adopted by the present Government. Thus Quetta in Beloochistan is now occupied by our troops, as an advanced post of our Western Indian frontier. This was one main point on the necessity of which I always insisted, and which, when I wrote, might have been carried out without firing a shot. The means of communication between Quetta and the Indus have been improved by railway and made roads, and I am sure that if any one in the Government of India now feels any regret connected with these lines of communication, it is regret that such suggestions were not earlier and more completely carried out. What agents we are now maintaining to let us know what goes on in Afghanistan, I cannot tell; but I conclude we have some, and I doubt whether they could have instructions less calculated to provoke war than those I recommended enjoining on them in 1874, viz.—“entire abstinence from meddling with the internal Government of the country; a policy of watchful vigilance, of sincere desire to support the ruler of



the country, actively and efficiently, as long as he maintained friendly relations with us in all matters of foreign policy." I may note that I also counselled abstinence from any attempt to *enforce* union of the Afghan states under a single ruler—advice which we may yet find was not altogether ill-judged or superfluous.

As regards these agents, if there is now any difficulty in maintaining them in positions where they can observe and accurately report what goes on in Afghanistan, such difficulty has certainly not arisen from following any advice of mine.

I referred then, and I can refer now, to officers still living who can prove that they did, habitually, long ago, and under my orders, what I recommended should be still done; and that they were able to gain the good-will and confidence of all with whom they came in contact—Afghans included—and to live as friends among them, not by bullying, intriguing, threatening, or provoking to war, but by frank, honest, straightforward and friendly bearing, such as befits English gentlemen; and by impressing on all with whom they came in contact—that if, at any time, war should be forced on us, it would be ill for those who provoked it—for that the English soldiers were men-at-arms who would accept no defeat. Sir William Merewether, unfortunately for the public service, has since gone from among us; but Sir Henry Green and his brother, Colonel Malcolm Green, Sir Lewis Pelly, and Sir Frederick Goldsmid and many others of the Sind Frontier School are still alive, and can testify that I suggested in 1874 nothing more than what they had, habitually and safely, and as a matter of course, done during many years as frontier officials whilst representing the English Government in the countries beyond our Western Indian frontier.

What were the circumstances under which the said frontier officials acted, and what the principles which they professed and carried out, were described by me in a memorandum which I drew up, for the information of the Viceroy, on the 22nd of March, 1876. I endeavoured in that paper to give an idea of the Sind system of frontier policy and action, as I had known it during the nine years (1850 to 1859), I was in political charge of all the Lower Indus frontier from Kussmore and the districts north of the Bolan Pass to the sea, including our relations with the Beloochis and the Southern Afghans about Candahar. I now refer to what I then wrote with the greater confidence, because it is obviously free from any possible reference to events which have since happened.\*



Sind had been annexed to British India in 1843, and for some years after the frontier was much disturbed by incursions of the Belooch tribes. Life and property were insecure for a considerable distance within British territory, and as late as 1847 many thousand head of cattle were swept off by a raid of Beloochees, who plundered up to the immediate neighbourhood of Shikarpoor. Till this time there had been much division of authority on the frontier. In 1847, General John Jacob was placed in command, and gradually introduced a system which was acted on, with little variation, as long as I remained in Sind. General Jacob died in 1858, but his firm, consistent, just, and humane system was well maintained for many years afterwards by his successors whom I have already named, and who can be referred to on the subject.

[The relations between the Khan of Khelat and the British officers in Sind had been generally friendly, though the Beloochees had no great reason to love us. In 1839 Sir J. Wiltshire, returning from Cabul, stormed Khelat, and the Ruler, Mehrab Khan, was slain in his citadel. A rival was set up by us as Khan, in place of his son, a child, Nusseer Khan, who fled westwards, but, having been brought back by his step-mother, Mehrab Khan's widow, a woman of great energy and ability, the interloper was deposed, Nusseer Khan was elected ruler, and we found it convenient to acquiesce in the succession. He behaved well after the British conquest of Sind from the Belooch Amirs, and in 1855 a treaty was concluded with him, by which he became a subordinate ally of the British Government, and a small subsidy was allowed him, to aid him in restoring order to his distracted country.]

During the nine years I remained in Sind as Commissioner up to 1859, the system introduced by General Jacob worked admirably. The peace and protection secured to our own subjects within the Sind border were extended up to the Candahar frontier. The wild Belooch tribes shared in the quiet and prosperity which British subjects everywhere enjoyed, and our officers were welcome guests wherever they went in the Khan of Khelat's dominions, and were on friendly terms with the Afghan Sirdars of Candahar.

The credit of the Sind frontier policy is mainly due to the late General John Jacob and to Sir Charles Napier, who, seeing Jacob's capacity for such duty, placed him in charge of that border. I claim no share in its success, beyond heartily supporting it, when, as Commissioner in Sind, I became responsible for the whole political and civil administration of Sind, and for the peace of that border. But I do claim to be a competent



witness to the merits of the system, and to be entitled to be heard when I testify that, by following it, not only did we preserve peace and good-will with our neighbours, but that we and all English officers there employed were respected and trusted, by those beyond the English border, as long as that policy was followed.

I have always, consistently, for a quarter of a century past, advocated that we should occupy Quetta in the territory of our ally the Khan of Khelat, who had agreed by Treaty to allow us to do so, and that we should improve our communications, viâ the Bolan Pass and Quetta, between the Indus and Candahar, rather than attempt to force an entrance into the Cabul Valley, viâ Jullalabad and the Khyber.

It seems to me that all the dear-bought experience of the past war is in favour of this view ; that the operations of Generals Roberts and Stewart have shown that the position I recommended was one more easy to take up and defend—diplomatically, as well as in a military sense—than either remaining inactive within the old frontier or advancing from Peshawar on Cabul ; that it would give us precisely the influence we desired to have in Afghanistan, without risk of war ; that it was, in fact, the best position for ensuring permanent peace.

Whether the late Afghan war was just or unjust, necessary or unnecessary ; whether it was a consequence of previous neglect and of contemptuous indifference to our relations with the Afghans, or whether there were other causes, are questions into which I am not now called to enter. All I have now to say is that there was no warrant for classing me, whether for blame or praise, among the authors or instigators of that war, when I was so far off as to be incapable of advising on the subject, and when all I had ever spoken or written regarding Afghanistan, for the previous twenty-five years, was in the interest of peace and good neighbourhood towards the Afghans.\*

It is too late now to repair the personal injustice done by the Midlothian speeches to Indian officials, the work of whose life, however obscure and unnoticed by English politicians, has always had for its aim to promote peace and the peaceful improvement of the people of India and their neighbours, whilst upholding the honour of England. But it is not yet too late to arrest some of the evil results, elsewhere, of such misrepresentations.

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\* As regards the late evacuation of the positions we had taken up in Afghanistan, I have always held the strongest opinion,—that whatever might be the merits of the question of original advance, our precipitate abandonment of the positions we held was as unwise as it was unjust.



The storm of Midlothian invective was directed not only against the Afghan policy of the late Government, but against all they had done and allowed in South Africa, and I, as one of their officials, was to be discredibly connected with their Afghan policy, in order to diminish any weight which might otherwise attach to my opinions as an actor in South Africa. The desired effect was produced. I was discredited and recalled, and all that I did and recommended, was, as far as possible, undone and disallowed.

I may note in passing that, though I belong to an old Tory family, I have myself been specially employed as much by Liberal as by Conservative Administrations, and, like my companions in the Indian services, have been trained to take, as my examples in public life, those who placed the honour and welfare of England above all other considerations, and to serve our Sovereign and country apart from all questions of party politics, as Englishmen above and before all things, whether we were Tories, Radicals, or Whigs.. It was therefore a new experience to me to find myself looked upon as a party tool.

So far, the revolution in South African policy, which Mr. Gladstone in his Midlothian speeches expressed his desire to effect, has been effected. It is possible that hereafter, when the heat of party prejudice has somewhat abated, a time may come to weigh facts and opinions in other balances than those of party, and show that Mr. Gladstone was not more accurate or just in describing what I did or advised to be done in South Africa, than he was with regard to Afghanistan.

Meantime, as the revolution of all that was done under the previous Government is not yet so complete in Africa as it is in Afghanistan, I would only ask all who are concerned in the welfare of our colonies in South Africa, to consider two main features of all I have ever recommended regarding our treatment of our fellow-subjects and neighbours in South Africa, as well as in Afghanistan.

First, as regards the natives, in all our dealings with them, I have ever recommended that we should protect and rule them in South Africa as we do in India. The best method of such protection is quite another question on which I will not enter now. I would only state my conviction that time will show that protection, without sovereign authority, is impossible; that the withdrawal of sovereignty means the withdrawal of protection; and that both sovereignty and protection may be effectually exercised through the Colonial Government, and by Ministers responsible to a freely elected Colonial Parliament, provided it is under the direct and unquestionable sovereignty of the Crown of England.



Secondly, as regards our fellow-subjects of European extraction,—I have always urged that we should protect and rule them in South Africa, on the same principles which we profess here and in Canada and Australia, and by similar machinery of self-government. Here, again, I must repeat my conviction that protection, without sovereign rule, will be found an impossibility; that withdrawal of our rule means anarchy and confusion; and that the necessary rule and protection may be given through Colonial Governments, constituted as is the government of the Cape, under the sovereignty of the British Crown, more effectually than in any other way.

But the most important point of all is that the word of the English Government should be inviolable. That pledges once given by the English Government should not be broken nor tampered with.

If the English Government has been so weakened and degraded that it is no longer able or willing to protect its loyal subjects in person or property, let us honestly say so; and let those who have weakened and degraded the realm, whether by impairing or withdrawing our army, or by encouraging, with false hopes of sympathy and success, traitors and lawless men—let the real authors of our weakness, degradation and defeat, bear the blame. But let us not deceive ourselves, nor try to deceive others, by raising false issues, or by assigning false reasons for avoiding performance of our engagements.

As regards the Cape Colony itself, nothing more seems to me needed than to let the Colony, under its existing constitution, work out its own political future. Let a similar measure of self-government, in all internal affairs, be given without stint or grudging, to the loyal, intelligent and every way competent Colonists of Natal, as I have repeatedly and long since recommended; and let equal measure be meted out to the Transvaal.

It is now nearly two years since I expressed the conviction that no less measure than self-government, controlled, as in the Cape and other Colonies, by the Crown, would content the Boers, and that no less, with proper constitutional checks and under the authority of the British Crown, should be granted to them. At that time I certainly never contemplated that a section of successful malcontents would be accepted as representing the whole population of the Transvaal. I then drew up the outlines of a Constitution, in which I was greatly assisted by the advice of the President of the Orange Free State, Mr. Brand; of the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir Henry de Villiers, of the Prime Minister, Mr. Sprigg, and of the Attorney-General, Mr. Upington, and other Dutch and



English gentlemen who knew the Boers thoroughly, and understood what was needed to give them a good and liberal form of government.

The materials so collected were at the disposal of Her Majesty's Government, when I was superseded as regarded all authority in the Transvaal in June, 1879. I drew the special attention of the late Sir George Colley to the subject when he came out in 1880, and placed copies of the materials I had collected at his disposal. In a letter which I received from him, dated Mount Prospect, February 7th, 1881, only a few days before his lamented death, he asked me whether I remembered sending him "an outline of a form of government approved by educated Dutch politicians?" and added, "I think with some modifications it might not be inapplicable to the Transvaal. I may be sanguine, but I still hope that this revolt will be followed by something of a reaction against its leaders and instigators, and that a favourable opportunity may offer for giving the Boers a somewhat more liberal constitution, and one which would satisfy the demands of the majority."

We shall possibly be told that efforts are now being made in the same direction by Sir George Colley's successor, aided by the advice of some of the same persons who helped me to put together the outlines of the constitution to which he refers in his letter to me.

But I see little chance of success, if the grand essentials of sovereign rule, and protection for all law-abiding subjects, are withdrawn. The result it seems to me must be much the same as if Ireland were now handed over to the Land League, by way of giving her self-government. What may ultimately be evolved out of a ferment of diverse nationalities in South Africa I do not pretend to forecast; but if the sovereign rule of the British Crown be withdrawn, I see little hope for the safety of life, property, or liberty in the Transvaal or beyond its borders, save from "the strong arm" of men fighting each for his own hand; and still less hope for peace and a cessation of war for many years to come.

H. B. E. FRERE.

*July 1881.*



## DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN PRECEDING NOTE.

### I.—SIR BARTLE FRERE'S LETTER TO SIR JOHN KAYE.

MY DEAR KAYE,

24, Chapel Street, Belgrave Square,  
12th June, 1874.

Many thanks for the papers regarding the Central Asian question. I have not seen Rawlinson's nor Burne's papers, and in what you sent me I find nothing new as regards the facts of the case,—nothing, I mean, beyond what the newspapers tell us, and what has been, in fact, foreseen for the last quarter of a century; for we find the whole clearly predicted in Sir John McNeil's pamphlet, which reached its third edition during the Crimean war, and in what many others have published since, besides what many more of us have written officially, and not published. The one new feature is that official politicians in India seem now at last seriously alarmed, and there is much risk that, like all men when they at last perceive a danger they have long been unable to recognize, they may rush in the wrong direction.

However, the policy of "masterly inactivity" seems at last abandoned by most of its former advocates. They no longer close their eyes, and turn their backs on obvious dangers which are rapidly approaching. All agree that the time is come when "something must be done," but what is that "something" to be? The Russians threaten Merv, and are steadily advancing along their whole frontier line. Our advisers all say, "we, too, must advance;" one of them adds, "we must saturate Turkestan with British influence and British goods;" and all seem to agree that we must make any move onwards by Russia a *casus belli*.

As for Turkestan, it is quite right to open any trade routes we can in that direction, and if we can induce the people there and in Thibet to trade with India more extensively, so much the better. It is an object well worth all the trouble and expense of such Missions as Forsyth's to attain. I would only urge that we should look at such questions occasionally from a Chinese point of view, consider how our Mission affects our relations with China, and take good care that our alliance with the Amir of Turkestan does not injuriously affect our position at Peking. As a barrier against Russian advance, a Turkestan alliance seems to me of little value. Of course, it is well at all times to be on the alert, to have our attention directed in that direction, and to have constant, late, and accurate information



of all that goes on in that quarter. The day may come when it may be very important to us to have a good name and good friends in Turkestan, whence a few active officers might in time of need make a useful flank impression on any force threatening India from the north-west. But Turkestan is not an easy route for invading India, and not likely to be used against us unless it should be so entirely neglected as, like any unguarded postern, to invite the approach of the invader.

As for Merv, I do not in the least underrate the importance to us of its occupation by Russia. But our threat to make such occupation of a troublesome refuge for frontier robbers and man-stealers a *casus belli* would be worse than simply ineffectual. It would not stop the Russian advance in the least. It would merely, if the Russians regarded our threat at all, postpone that one step till, as in the case of the abrogation of the obnoxious clauses regarding the Black Sea in the Treaty of Paris, the step, in itself a necessary one, and useful to civilization and good order, irrespective of Russian interests, would be taken at a moment when we could not go to war with any chance of fighting to good purpose.

A little consideration will show that this must be the case. What is it that impels Russia to advance? We are pretty well agreed that the impulse is the same as that which impelled ourselves from Calcutta to Peshawur. We were a strong, united, aggressive, and growing Power, in contact with States so disunited and demoralized that their power was paralyzed, and had no inherent vigour and capacity for resistance, still less for growth. Henco they invariably gave way and crumbled before us, and when there was any inherent vigour left in them to resist, they always gave us some good cause for quarrel, and were soon worsted in fair fight. We never stopped in conquering India for considerations of home policy, or in obedience to any orders from London. Some of our greatest acquisitions were made, in our own generation, by men who came out sincerely determined to avoid extension of boundary, but the course of conquest was never stayed till we got to the barriers of the mountain regions which surround India on the land side. All this was in spite of the most constant and positive orders from home, and the most sincere wish on the part of men at the head of affairs in India to obey those orders.

It is the same with Russia, with this difference, that instead of public opinion at home being, as was the case in England, strongly and sincerely pronounced against further extension of territory, there are in Russia, as I need not tell you, two opposite political parties. Neither of them objects, on any moral ground, to extensions of territory; but one of them, including the Emperor himself and some of the best and most able financiers and enlightened politicians, is strongly opposed to further extension in Asia, on grounds of expediency. The great mercantile party of protectionists, many of the Russianized Germans, who are more Russian than the Russians, most of the military and the ultra-national politicians, on the other hand,



are enthusiastic supporters of further schemes of conquest, and this party is by far the more popular and powerful.

If we, with our strong political discipline, with the earnest desire of Viceroys to obey orders, and with a still more earnest desire on the part of the nation at large to avoid conquest, if we, so favourably situated for abstention from aggressive warfare, found circumstances too strong for us, and were unwillingly forced on from the sea to the Himalayas, what chance has the Russian Government, or that party in it which dreads further conquest, of resisting the pressure of the same kind, but much greater in degree, which forces them to break up and annex the savage hordes intervening between them and India? I need not to you repeat how the annexation comes about; how the civilized power, theirs as well as ours, is forced to put its best men in contact with the uncivilized neighbour; how, if the frontier commander is ambitious, his uncivilized neighbours give him constant and apparently justifiable cause for hostilities, which in the end must always lead to the victorious advance of the stronger and more civilized power; how, if the frontier commander is conscientious or unambitious, the uncivilized neighbour gravitates to the stronger power by a process less violent than in the former case, but even more certain; how, when any semi-civilized "Humpty Dumpty" gets his fall, "all the king's horses and all the king's men" are utterly unable to set him up again; how there is life and power of recovery after the most damaging defeat and disaster in the most mismanaged branch of the civilized power, and how there is nothing but death and decay in the uncivilized; how the one power is insensibly and by internal vigour urged to grow and aggress, while the other has no inherent force of resistance, unless he gives up his antiquated arms and indiscipline, and takes to himself the powerful weapons and military array of civilized nations, which are of no avail, in fact, which cannot long exist, unless he abandons also his barbarous habits and policy of finance and internal administration, in a word, unless he enters the ranks of civilized nations. All these things you know and have seen, and therefore I need not argue to you that, while Russia is a civilized, living, and growing Power, the wishes even of the all-powerful Czar and his ablest councillors are of little avail in stopping her career of growth and conquest among the least civilized races of Asia.

But the Russians have one source of impulse which moves them more powerfully than it does us, though we, too, feel something of it. I mean the religious crusading element; this, as you know, is studiously discouraged and generally distrusted by our politicians, and though there is a strong missionary impulse in many classes of the community, sufficiently strong to ensure respectful treatment from those who do not share it among the governing class, it is by no means a fashionable and hardly a popular political impulse. But it is quite otherwise in Russia, where whatever of real loyalty exists is inseparably bound up with religion, and whatever is religious is actively propagandist, and hostile to non-Christian powers. To a modern religious Russian the prospect of a war with a Mahomedan or



an idolatrous Prince has the same aspect and excites the same feelings as a crusade did among religious Englishmen in the middle ages. I only mention this because I think it is one of the forces impelling Russia onwards of which we take less account as a political force than it deserves. It is in many ways a great source of strength to her. So is the declared policy of the Russian Government to spare no pains to put down slavery wherever her influence extends, such slavery, I mean, as that prevalent among the Turcomans and throughout Central Asia. Contrast our feelings, or the feelings of intelligent Americans, when they heard that the slave markets in Khiva and Bokhara were abolished, with what you and I felt when we ineffectually ground our teeth as we read of what poor Stoddart and Conolly were suffering; and we may have some faint idea of the national credit, the sense of duty performed, and the impulse to do more, which patriotic Russians feel when they consider what they are doing in Asia. The work may not be very perfect, but their feeling regarding it reckons for much in weighing political forces, as compared with the half-hearted shilly-shallying of our ordinary dealings with such questions, when we get beyond the bounds of India and the four corners of an Act of Parliament.

The result of all this is, that Russia will go on, whether her Government wish it or not, till something stops her; and what will stop her? Nothing that I can see, except an impassable barrier, such as we found in the mountain chain of the Himalayas, or a political barrier, such as finding herself on a frontier which she cannot pass without fighting an equally powerful nation on the other side, and where that powerful nation is civilized like herself, and able and willing to give her honest hearing and reasonable redress with regard to all frontier discussions, and to require equal justice from her.

A "neutral zone," consisting of the territory of uncivilized powers is worse than useless as a barrier, simply because the uncivilized power is, by the nature of things, sure to act in a way which would give an aggressive and growing power on its border an irresistible cause for advance; or, if the civilized power is sufficiently strong and determined to abstain from aggression, the weak and uncivilized power must gravitate towards the stronger body, and become in time a part of it, without formal annexation or aggression.

For similar reasons, it will not be a sufficient check on the Russian advance to find themselves on the frontier of an uncivilized power, under our influence or protection, unless we are prepared to use that influence to direct the uncivilized power in all its relations with its neighbours. We must be prepared not only to support the protected State when right, but to force it to make satisfaction when wrong; otherwise we shall not close the opening for interference by the other civilized power on the opposite side, because we can offer no effectual guarantee that our uncivilized neighbour shall not repeat the provocation, and therefore we can have no valid objection to offer to Russia, on the opposite border, exacting efficient guarantees for her own security.



This forms the great difficulty of any alliance with or protectorate of Affghanistan. An alliance is illusory, as we are now finding out to our cost, unless our ally be a ruler of exceptional wisdom, experience, and foresight like Dost Mahomed. As for a protectorate, it is an essential element in any system of protection that the protected State should be willing to be guided by the advice of its protector in all matters of foreign policy. But it is hopeless to attempt anything of the kind in Affghanistan, unless the protectorate were preceded by a thorough conquest, such as should clearly subject the Ruler of Affghanistan to be guided by the advice of the British Government.

What, then, is the barrier which I would propose to raise to Russia's advance towards India?

Let us, before answering this question, consider the essential difference of British and Russian policy, using the word less in the sense of a design for political action, which may be changed from time to time, than as the result of national instincts and tendencies, and the expression of national interests, which are less variable. Used in this sense, Russian policy in Asia is, as we all see, positive, active, and aggressive. Whatever may be the professions or the wishes of Russian statesmen, the exigencies of her frontier position render it impossible for Russia to stand still until she meets some physical or political obstacle, which certainly does not at this moment exist between her frontier and ours. The question, when the two frontiers will be conterminous, is, as far as Russia is concerned, simply one of more or less time.

Our policy, on the other hand, is purely defensive and stationary, and it seems to me that, by the nature of our position, it must so continue, unless we are inclined to enter the lists as rivals to Russia, and to embark on indefinite schemes of further Asiatic conquest. The nation is clearly not prepared, nor likely to be prepared, for this if it has due warning, has its eyes open to the consequences, and is aware that if once more on the move we may find it not easy to stop, nor to choose our own limit to our conquest.

But our policy hitherto has been not only stationary, and nominally, though I think very imperfectly, defensive. It has been also purely negative. We are ready enough to say what we will *not* do, but all efforts by any of the other Asiatic Powers concerned have hitherto failed to elicit from the Government, either here or in India, any declaration of what it *will* do, under any given or conceivable combination of circumstances.

This peculiarity in our policy will at once explain to any one who knows Orientals, or, in fact, to any one who knows mankind in general, the inherent weakness of our policy as compared with that of the Russians. We find it so every day in Europe: negatives do not satisfy Belgium or Denmark, Switzerland, Turkey, Sweden, or any other Power that can possibly need a good word or a friendly act from us. How then can they satisfy a man like the Ameer, the Shah, or any other Oriental, who understands, and may trust, a positive promise, but who can neither understand nor trust a simple



assertion that, "when the time comes and the event happens we will think about it," and who cannot estimate, as an European diplomatist can, what, from a variety of motives, we may do, in the event of a weak European Power being threatened by a strong one?

What then ought we now to do? Stand still, and do nothing? Clearly this can only precipitate events. Orientals generally misunderstand our present inaction. They suspect some deep design, some secret understanding with Russia. If it is once understood that nothing will move us till the Russians appear on our frontier, we shall certainly hasten that event by a great many years.

But a defensive policy is not necessarily inactive, nor merely stationary, still less is it necessarily weak. On the contrary, a true defensive policy for India seems to me to require, now more than ever, much active exertion in many directions. Our great danger, greater than anything we can fear from foreign designs of aggression, seems to be on our own side the border, in the Indian belief that we are indifferent to, or afraid of, or connive at the Russian conquests, in our English *insouciance*, and distaste for the subject, which is certain to end in a sudden rude awakening to the dangers of our position, and a risk of passionate, ill-considered, violent action, which is more dangerous to peace in democratic communities than the most ambitious designs of despotic autocrats.

What then ought to be the character of our action? As for making an advance upon Merv by Russia a *casus belli*, I do not think the proposal will stand examination; the place is nothing to us, except as a step towards Herat and Cabul, and it is not a necessary step to either; to prohibit the Russians from taking it might, in the event of their regarding our prohibition, force them to turn it, and thus delay for some short time the extermination of hordes of robbers and man-stealers, whose intervention between us and Russia must ever be a fruitful source of misunderstanding. But the Russians will not, or, more correctly speaking, they cannot, stop for any mere threats or promises of ours.

Nothing, I believe, will be effectual to arrest their progress towards India till we have British Officers stationed on the Indian side of a well-defined frontier, exercising an effective control over the politics of the semi-civilized races on our side of such a border, and in constant frank diplomatic communication with Russian officers on the other side.

But how is this to be effected without annexation, or protectorate almost equivalent to annexation, and supported by force?

We must carry much further, and make more generally understood, the liberal, frank, and independent policy inaugurated by Lord Mayo. Much ingenuity and eloquence were expended, when Lord Mayo went out to India, to prove that, in his dealings with the Ameer of Affghanistan, there was no departure from our previous policy; but the fact is that Lord Mayo endeavoured, and with much success, to reverse the "masterly inactivity" policy of the previous 20 years, and to revert to that system of dealing with our powerful frontier neighbours, which when Sir George Clerk was at Umballa, and other men of like spirit



in other parts of India, was so successful, and which at the present day, wherever it is tried, gives us all the security we can desire. Up to Lord Mayo's time, our policy towards the Affghans had, with rare and fitful exceptions, been one of constant neglect and distrust. For many years after we evacuated Affghanistan we maintained a sullen and distrustful silence, which, after the occupation of the Punjab, was exchanged for a policy of almost active hostility; we did all we could to weaken the Ameer's authority with his frontier Chiefs, and to neutralize their power by sowing distrust and dissension among them.

With the exception of expeditions to burn and lay waste, our Punjab officers were prohibited from intercourse with their neighbours over the border. When, after years of non-intercourse, some of the Candahar Chiefs sought to renew friendly intercourse with our officers in Sind, I was severely censured by Lord Dalhousie for proposing that the advance should be received in a kindly spirit. It is true that the discussion of the arguments I adduced in support of my views, aided by the sound sense with which Sir Herbert Edwardes, shortly afterwards, advocated a policy similar to that which I proposed, and possibly other causes unknown to me, soon afterwards induced Lord Dalhousie to relax in some degree the system of non-intercourse, and later on we were driven by our own interests during the Persian war to cultivate better relations with the Affghans; but nothing like a cordial, a generous policy towards the Affghans was adopted by the Government of India till Lord Mayo went out, and the success of the system had scarcely become apparent when he died.

We must, it seems to me, act now independently and openly in the same spirit. We must not attempt to impose on the Ameer with any profession of disinterested regard for his welfare, we must let him see that we fully appreciate the danger which threatens ourselves as well as him, by Russian advance, and that we intend to stop all occasion for such advance in his direction, by assisting him so to govern Affghanistan that he shall give Russia no pretence for interference.

Your first and greatest difficulty will be, I fear, with your own people on the frontier. Matters are in some respects improved since I found it difficult to persuade a Punjab frontier official that it was possible to deal with Asiatic neighbours on the same principles as those professed in our dealings with Europeans; that by a "just, conciliatory, and neighbourly policy," we did not mean a weak system of humbug, of wholesale bribery, and payment of blackmail to frontier robbers; that, by a "firm and strong policy," we did not intend sudden reprisals, and raids into our neighbours' territory, setting tribe against tribe and family against family, ruthless destruction of the crops and trees, village burnings, and indiscriminate slaughter of all found in arms.

The views held on these subjects by most of our Punjab frontier officers are much sounder now than they were twenty years or even ten years ago.



But nothing can make up for the loss of such a noble school of frontier officers as John Jacob founded, and which the Government of India so persistently discouraged, and ultimately abolished. You will find it every day more difficult to form men such as your Punjab frontier has furnished, and of which you have some still left. But if you intend to keep India, you must manage to train up men in the spirit of your Malcolms, Elphinstones, and Metcalfes of times past, and of Sir George Clerk in later days;—men who by their character and the confidence the Natives have in them, can hold their own without the immediate presence of battalions and big guns.

The active measures which seem to me essential for our present purpose are, first, to place an advanced post of our frontier army in the Khan of Khelat's territory at Quetta, sufficiently strong to prevent the place being carried till reinforcements can arrive from the Indus, between which and Quetta the communication should be improved, as far and as fast as practicable, to the foot of the Bolan and throughout that pass. This would establish above the passes, and in the territory of a power bound by treaty to act in subordinate co-operation with us, an advanced post in an excellent position for watching Southern Affghanistan, and acting, if necessary, on the flank of anything which might threaten India from the Khyber Pass and Cabul. These measures require no diplomacy, nor consultation with any other power, except the Khan of Khelat, and we have treaties and engagements with him which give us all the power we can require. A detachment from Jacobabad has frequently passed the summer in Quetta, and nothing more is necessary than to strengthen and provision such a post, and make it capable of permanent occupation.

But I am not at all sure that you may not now find covert opposition in quarters where you would have found ready acquiescence in such a scheme a few years ago. I heard last week from an old Indian friend that he lately met, on board a steamer in the Black Sea, two Russian Officers of rank, who began talking to him about Affghan politics, and one of them told my friend that he had lived for six months at Khelat. I never saw any mention of such a visitor in any of our frontier reports. But I have often thought that the perverse conduct of the Khan lately, betokened an idea that he could rely on other support than that of the Government of India.

The railway for 150 miles, from the Indus to the Bolan, would run over a level plain very similar to that which, in Northern Bengal, a railway has just been made at the rate of a mile a day. Thence to Quetta the road may be easily and cheaply improved by keeping parties of pioneers at work on it, remembering that nothing more than a practicable road for artillery is needed.

Secondly, well-selected English agents should be placed at Herat, Cabul, and Candahar. I still retain my own predilections for Military Officers for such service, but they should be picked men, with good training in the scientific branches of their profession, hardy, active, good linguists, and, above all, men of good temper and disposition, calculated to secure the confidence of the Chiefs they have



to deal with. Their policy must be strictly laid out for them; it must be one of entire abstinence from all meddling with the internal government of the country, of watchful vigilance as regards all that goes on, and actuated by a sincere desire to support the Ruler of the country, actively and efficiently, as long as he maintained friendly relations with us, and dealt frankly and in a friendly spirit with the English Government regarding all matters of foreign policy.

This need not be a costly proceeding, if we are careful to avoid the mistake of subsidizing the Prince, so as to make him rely more upon our treasury than on his own thrift and good management.

But what if the Ameer should object to follow our advice? If the matter did not affect his foreign relations he might be left to follow his own inclinations; but if it affected such a question as his relations with other powers than ourselves, I would give him clearly to understand that he must not count on our support unless he followed our advice. I would not break with him save in the last extremity, and after all hope of continuing friendly relations had disappeared; but I would clear for action, and give him unequivocally to understand that we held ourselves free to act as might seem best for our own interests, which were to give foreign powers no good ground for interference with him or us.

If, as we are told, the Ameer already evinces dislike and distrust towards our Government, we cannot too soon come to a clear understanding with him as to whether he means peace and effectual alliance or the reverse. If peace, then I would let no small obstacle hinder our placing a British Officer, not necessarily in the capital, but in a position to judge for himself, and to report to us all that goes on at Cabul. If, on the contrary, the Ameer objects to such a course, and wishes to keep us at arm's length, I would let him clearly see we regarded his objection as proof of unfriendliness, and were prepared to act accordingly.

With regard to the present state of affairs at Herat, I would immediately depute from the Persian side an intelligent and scientific Military Officer, with three or four good assistants, acquainted with all arms of the service, and if the Ruler of Herat could be induced to receive them, I would establish them there permanently. This, no doubt, in the present state of affairs, would give umbrage to the Ameer of Cabul, but I would let him clearly understand that we could not sit by while he quarrelled with the ablest and most popular of his relations, and, possibly, successors; that we must recognize the actual state of affairs in Afghanistan, and would not countenance a repetition, by him, of the process by which his father wasted his own life and the resources of his kingdom, in establishing his direct rule over Herat.

In the event of his persisting, I would inform him that we should withdraw all countenance from him, and reserve to ourselves full liberty to treat as we might think proper with the Ruler of Herat. On the other hand, I would offer our good offices to both parties to



effect such a formal reconciliation as should save the Ameer's nominal sovereignty, adjourning all further questions to the indefinite period of the next vacancy of the throne. Nothing, of course, but extreme pressure will induce the Ameer to acquiesce in this course, but the pressure ought, I think, to be applied.

I need not say I would lose no time in completing the railway communication *on an uniform gauge*, from Kurrachee, *viâ* Mooltan and Lahore, to Peshawur, with a branch from Sukkar, to the Bolan Pass.

In considering this Central Asian question it never seems to me that, either those that are for active measures on our North-West frontier, or their opponents the advocates of "masterly activity," fairly appreciate the real character of the danger to be guarded against, or the respective kinds of strength of the parties concerned.

What is our danger in India from Russian advance? People talk of a Russian invasion of India. If this means an expedition, like the expeditions to Khiva and Bokhara, formally prepared by the Russian Government with Russian forces, and marching from the Russian frontier to attack us, the danger is perhaps a remote one. No Russian statesman in his senses would, as matters now stand, dream of attempting such a thing for a long time to come; the Russians have neither the money, the men, nor the organization necessary for such an undertaking, while they have an active enemy of great power at sea, able to worry them in the Baltic and the Black Seas, and on land all along their line from the Caucasus to the Indus. I think I could name a round dozen of our Officers any one of whom would undertake to stop, and could stop, such an expedition, or at any rate cut it off from its Russian base, without moving a single British regiment, if he had the command of a few hundred thousand pounds, a few good subordinate officers, and three months warning. So far I quite agree with the "masterly inactivity" advocates, and I have no doubt whatever of the entire sincerity of all Russian statesmen and soldiers of judgment when they disclaim any idea of such an invasion of India for their own generation.

But the danger I apprehend is not of this kind; it is twofold.

First, there is the danger which Dost Mahomed well described to Burnes, as like that apprehended when you see a stranger looking over your garden wall; he may be on his own side of the fence, and he may make no seeming attempt to come over; but you know he is there for no good, and you do your best to dislodge him, and do not rest till you have done so.

If we suppose Affghanistan only so far Russianized that Russian travellers freely move about the country, that Russian Officers and men, not necessarily in the pay of the Russian Government, but deserters possibly or vagabonds from Russia, drill the Ameer's troops, cast his cannon, coin his rupees, and physic him and his subjects, what would be the effect in India? Can any man in his senses, who knows anything of India, doubt that the effect now, and for many years to come, must be to disquiet every one in India, except that



great majority of the cultivators who will go on cultivating without talking politics till the crack of doom? Every Englishman, from the Governor-General downwards, will be disquieted; they will feel that a great foreign Power has almost as much to say to the proceedings of all the troublesome classes as the Viceroy and his English officials. Every Prince and Chief will see in the Russians a possible alternative claimant for empire in India, all the disaffected, dangerous, and criminal classes will be on the *qui vive*, ready to stir at a moment's notice; and all the millions who still have some martial spirit left will furbish their swords and believe that another era of fighting and fair contest for martial renown and plunder, is at hand. All these elements may be stirred into strife any moment by a Russian proclamation issued at Cabul, or even by a false report of one, for it is not necessary that the report should be true, to set some of these restless elements in motion.

Now this danger, to be reasonably apprehended from a Russian Minister established at Cabul and Russian subjects quietly permeating Afghanistan, is a danger which is never many weeks removed from the present time. I have no doubt that the good feeling of the existing Government in Russia would prevent their taking any steps towards it if we seriously remonstrated with them at the present moment; but we must recollect that the more material part of such a step may be taken at any moment by a daring Russian frontier commander who chooses to run the risk of formal disavowal and recall; and that, once taken, the step would be, or might be said by the Russians to be, irrevocable. If the Ameer chooses to invite a Russian Officer of rank, if he promises and affords friendly protection to all Russian visitors, in what form at the present moment could we put our complaint, and what could we say, in answer to the Russian reply to our remonstrances, if they said, "our frontier is now conterminous with that of the Ameer. It is absolutely necessary, in order to avoid disputes and complications, that we should have an accredited representative at the Ameer's right hand, and we see no other way of avoiding continual grounds of discussion and offence, and of enabling us to observe our moral obligations as good neighbours to the Ameer and his friends the British Government of India."

Looking to the time it took to move the Foreign Office and our friends the Turks in the matter of the Turkish aggressions near Aden, years may elapse before the negotiations and correspondence on such a subject could come to a point; and, if we found the Russians firm, what are we to do? Do you think the English people could or ought to be roused to declare war on Russia merely because the Russians obtained from our semi-barbarous ally an amount of friendly protection for their representatives and subjects which the Ameer declares he cannot afford to us? I think the English people would be very likely to say, "If you must declare war with some one, declare war against the Ameer: he is the real offender, and the first person to be punished. If the Russians help him, we will think about fleets to the Baltic and Black Sea. Meantime, you Indians have



“only your own blundering politicians to blame if you are in a worse position at Cabul than the Russians are.”

This, it seems to me, would be the case if a Russian Minister were established, either formally or informally, at Cabul, and friendly relations prevailed between Russians and Affghans, while we are in the present state of apparent peace in Europe. But how would it be if we were engaged in any discussions such as have occupied our diplomatists during the last ten years, about Danish or Cuban questions, or Luxemburg questions, or Spanish, or Swiss, or Italian questions, in which Russia wished us either to support her actively, or in which she desired to neutralize our voice against her? She would then only have to instruct her Minister at Cabul to show his teeth, to hold language insulting or offensive to us, and to get the Ameer to make ostentatious preparations for war. If subsequently peace were patched up in Europe, the Minister might be recalled, in satisfaction of our remonstrances, but, meantime, what would be the effect in India? Should we be able to withdraw a single regiment or gun? Should we not be probably called upon to increase our Indian Army, and get ready for war? All this, remember, may be done without our actually breaking with Russia.

But the case would be far more serious if matters went a little further. I have never seen any difficulty in a Russian agent impelling upon us, in India, hordes of Asiatic barbarians, more or less disciplined by renegade Russian and Indian soldiers, and many of them deserters from our own army, followed by a vast train of undisciplined marauders, such as followed Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah almost within living memory. When people doubt the possibility of such a move, and talk of want of commissariat, &c., they speak in entire ignorance of the mode in which an Asiatic marauder, or even a regularly paid soldier of an Asiatic power, habitually travels. Of course such a force would be met as soon as it appeared in India, and we may hope it would be defeated, if not annihilated. But what will take place in the meantime? how much expense will be incurred in repelling them? how many outbreaks will occur in India itself? and who can tell what will happen when once the rolling stone is put in motion? and all this, it seems to me, may be done without Russia committing herself to a clear *casus belli*, or being in any way actively unfriendly.

We are always sure of having in the Russian Councils one large and influential party sincerely opposed to any attempt to favour such inroads on India, but we are also sure of there being always an opposite party, bent on Russian extension, regardless of ultimate consequences, and capable of doing an immense deal of mischief before any check can be applied.

You will naturally ask what is the remedy I propose for this state of things, and I will briefly state the principle on which I would proceed. First of all, I would endeavour to meet the danger as far as possible from our own frontier, without placing any hostile power between us and our Indian base. Some of these measures I have already described. They involve the establishment of a perfect



intelligence department of European Officers in Affghanistan, and, if possible, a preponderating influence there; but I would not attempt the subjugation of the country nor its military occupation, because I believe that we can effectually keep out all rivals by supporting a national Government. Hence I would not attempt to hold Herat by a force of our own troops, at least, not until we have tried the effect of such measures as Todd, and Pottinger, and Rawlinson proved could be so effectual in most cases. I would not attempt to enforce union of the Affghan States under a single Ruler; I would not oppose such union, if the Ruler seemed capable of effecting it; I would give him the best advice I could on the subject, but avoid committing myself to support an unpopular and imbecile candidate for united Affghan Empire. I believe if we dealt candidly and frankly with the Affghans, as Metcalfe and Clerk dealt with the Sikhs, we might maintain supreme influence among them as long as we can command a succession of such men. But you must trust them largely, and remember that their expenditure cannot be conducted like that of an overseer of a Union workhouse, under a vigilant Board of Guardians.

I would greatly increase our naval force in Indian seas, and I would make those seas take the place of the Mediterranean as an ordinary cruising-ground of one of our principal squadrons. Now that there are other Powers with a naval force in the Mediterranean besides France and Spain, our position there is much altered. There are Turks, Greeks, and Egyptians, Italians, and Germans, and Russians, as well as Frenchmen and Spaniards, to balance one another. With Gibraltar and Malta in our hands, we shall be as well able to hold our own in the Mediterranean as in old days; but we seem too apt to forget that the opening of the Suez Canal has materially altered our naval position in India. All the Mediterranean Powers I have named, and America also, have now some days' start of us in getting to the coast of India, and a well-directed naval expedition might now establish a hostile force on our Indian coasts, in a position to be seriously troublesomé, while our attention was directed north-westwards. This would have been far more difficult before the Suez Canal was opened, because we had then the start of all other naval Powers in getting to India. We ought to have, what we have not now, a squadron amply sufficient to protect our Indian coasts from insult or aggression, and be able to refit in India even during a temporary interruption of the route by the Suez Canal. Hitherto the Viceroy has had little need for thinking of his navy, but in the next war he will have to make it his chief concern.

As to Turkey and Persia, we must abandon all hopes of any revival which is not preceded by a change of dynasty. Both Powers have had their chance of reform, and both have shown its utter hopelessness, under present conditions. It is, perhaps, well for us that Turkey has so decidedly taken the initiative in throwing off all reliance upon us or our aid, and in assuming an unfriendly and sometimes semi-defiant attitude. Of course, any one can see that both Turkey



and Persia have enormous natural capacities for becoming great nations. A ruler like Mehemet Ali could make either of them perfectly independent and very powerful in twenty years, or less; but where is he to come from? Such men are rarely produced in reigning Oriental families, except in time of war. In peace, they are not uncommon in Mahometan families of what we may call the middle class; but I can scarcely remember one, in modern days, in a great Mahometan ruling family, nor do I see how they can well be produced in time of peace. Some experienced Orientalists, who are great believers in the existing apparatus of Mahometan States, seem to me under a dangerous delusion on this point; in tents in the desert, or in houses in remote country districts, they meet frugal, brave, and honest Mahometan gentlemen, with all the good qualities needed in a ruling race, and they fancy that the same sort of being can be produced or can exist in a Mahometan palace in peace time; but if they would consider the effects of the slavery and polygamy, which are essential institutions in such palaces, they would see that the production of such a ruler is unlikely, and his peaceable succession to sovereign power, except under such extraordinary circumstances as those which produced and have maintained Salar Jung, is still more difficult, and that the difficulty is due to other causes besides the enervating effects of the haram life in which the young prince is brought up. Where slavery is a cherished institution, the child of the beautiful handmaid will often be preferred by his father to the offspring of the legal princess; and, where polygamy is permitted, the infant son of almost imbecile old age will have a better chance of being his father's favourite and heir elect, than the eldest born, who has been trained to obey as well as to command, and is practised in war and politics.

These two domestic institutions keep Turkey and Persia outside the family circle of European sovereigns even more effectually than religion; and, taken in conjunction with religion, exclude them quite as effectually from the active sympathy of a European public.

What sort of change in dynasty would give Turks or Persians a chance, we need not trouble ourselves to discuss. There are many changes obviously possible, but the one thing certain is, that the present state of things cannot long continue, and that you never will get the English people again to fight for such effete dynasties. Russia or any other Power might behave to them with any amount of injustice or insult, such as would ensure an explosion of English popular sympathy in favour of Denmark or Holland; still it would only be necessary to publish a true history of Court life at Constantinople or Teheran, to ensure the English people, high and low, declaring that they would neither shed blood nor spend money to support such a sink of iniquity, and that the Russians were quite right to wipe them off the face of the earth. I am not speaking now of what is abstractedly right or just, but of what is inevitable.

The case of Egypt is somewhat different, but the fate of the present dynasty just now is in the balance, and depends very much on whether the rising generation of the Khedive's children incline to Oriental or



Western habits in their family affairs. I see a formidable increase of luxury among the richer Egyptians during the past forty years since I first knew the country in Mehemet Ali's day; but there has been, on the other hand, a considerable approximation in some ways towards the domestic, social, and political habits of Europeans, and an enormous increase of Frank and other non-Moslem interests and power. There is much room for hope if the ability of the Khedive is inherited by his successors, but the future of that dynasty is a doubtful question to be solved only by the event.

Meantime the Khedive probably sees clearly enough that his interests are more identified with ours than with those of any other of his European neighbours. He possibly thinks us more disinterested, or at any rate that our interest in his affairs is not warped by desire for territorial extensions of empire, and he hopes that we would fight to support him, if his independence in his capacity of trustee for the Suez Canal were seriously threatened. He has more faith in our desire to help him with something besides good advice and good wishes, than probably any other country, and he knows that we wish him to do little but what is really for his good, and calculated to make him a great Mediterranean Power. So far I doubt whether we could hold a better position in Egypt than we now possess.

As regards Turkey and Persia, I see nothing for us but a position of watchful isolation, with a much stiffer assertion of our own rights than has been usual of late years. The only active measures which seem practicable and worth taking are the employment of selected English officers in such positions that they shall become acquainted with the language and character of the people, and with the topography of the country. It does not signify much how such officers are employed, provided they gain this kind of knowledge, and are able to keep the Government and the public of England constantly informed as to what is going on around them. I would grudge no expense in paying good officers to discipline troops, to conduct surveys, geological or antiquarian, or in managing telegraphs, or in any other way that gave them the requisite knowledge of the country and its people and language. I would not attempt the establishment of any exclusive or special influence, political or military; I would have no affectation of any desire to bolster up the existing state of things; I would let Turks and Persians, and Syrians, understand that, if we take an interest in their affairs, it is for our own purposes, not for theirs; that we have interests in their country which we do not intend to neglect, nor to see postponed by any indifference or apathy, still less by any hostile feeling on the part of the local government; that we intend to assert our own rights, and further our own interests, as far as we can justly do so; and that, while we wish them well, and want none of their ports nor territory, we shall not trouble ourselves if they persist in going the way to ruin; that we shall simply look after our own affairs, and take no part in any scramble for the fragments of their empire when it falls to pieces; as long as they behave



justly and rightly to their neighbours, their interests and ours are identical; if they behave unjustly, we shall take care of our own affairs and protect our own people and interests. This may seem a very selfish, cynical policy, but I cannot see that anything better is possible in dealing with Governments so hopelessly rotten, unless we enter the lists with Russia or other Powers as possible heirs to dynasties so near their dissolution, and such a course would be full of difficulty and danger. Nor, in the case of Turkey, is there the slight colourable excuse for it which there might have been before the Crimean war. We may now trust to Germany and Austria, Greece and Italy, to balance Russia, at least as well as England and France combined could have done twenty years ago, and in those twenty years a great local Christian interest has grown up in Turkey which is neither Greek, German, nor Russian, but which may be Turkish without the Turks, which is annually growing in power and importance, and which will have to be considered by any one who wishes to reign in the Sultan's room at Constantinople.

The case of Persia is not so far advanced. There is at present in Persia no visible domestic rival to the Kajar dynasty, but many things may happen before the Russians could safely extend their direct sovereignty so far south, and till they get far enough to interfere with Indian interests, we have no good ground for such active interference in Persian affairs, as is necessary if we wish to rival Russia at Teheran.

It does not seem to me that a revolution in those countries can be far off. You know I have for many years past expected a fresh outbreak of Mahometan fanaticism, and many things seem to me to indicate that the time of such outbreak is approaching, and that we may at any day see the nations of western and northern Europe forced to interfere in protecting their subjects and co-religionists against Mahometan fanaticism. I never think our diplomatists pay enough attention to the changes in religious thought among the Mahometans themselves. We sometimes hear talk of a Mahometan revival, but, as far as we can see, the change which is going on is not a revival so much as preparation for a last despairing effort to regain the position which they find they have been losing during the last century and a half. The wide circulation of vernacular translations of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures has set many Mahometans thinking over texts of sacred writ, for which they entertain at least as much reverence as our own people, and the lessons they draw from the Bible prophecies of a closely approaching struggle between the powers of good and evil are not favourable to their contentment or to their living peaceably with Christian neighbours. Dr. Cumming's political influence is not great among us; but a Mussulman Dr. Cumming is a very different affair, and may become a very formidable political power, as we may learn to our cost at no very distant period. I think we should stand by for squalls wherever we find ourselves in contact with Mahometans, which may be said to be everywhere from the Mediterranean to China. We are not likely to repeat the mistakes



of the Crimean war, but I do not know that any principle can be laid down for us other than taking care of our own people, and not permitting our communications with India, either *viâ* Suez or the Tigris, to be permanently broken through. I would assume a much more peremptory tone in dealing with any meddling with such communications either on the part of Egyptians or Turks. I would let them clearly understand that we have substantial interests in Egypt, Arabia, and Syria, which other nations do not possess; that we are quiet people and good neighbours when nobody interferes with us, but that we know how to protect ourselves vigorously when any one meddles with us. I believe that this kind of self-assertion will be quite sufficient to prevent all danger of our being dragged into territorial entanglements and wars, but I am quite certain that wars and temptations to territorial conquests are the natural consequences either of neglect or of an affectation of disinterested moderation, which every one, who knows the habitual dealings of our countrymen with weaker nations, must see is pure humbug.

As regards Indian force, there are many things which seem to me of the utmost political importance as bearing on our position in Central Asia. I will only briefly indicate,—

First, a thorough reform of our Indian Army, the condition of which, at this present moment, seems to me in the last degree unsatisfactory. We are paying an enormous sum for an Army which no one trusts, except as regards the European portion, and much of what is trustworthy is dangerously locked up in bad strategical positions. You know, as well as I do, that an effectual reform of the Army, such as would make it as good as an Army on a peace establishment can be, is not a difficult matter, if the necessary power were given to such men as Napier and the Officers he would select. But I own I see little chance of such reform till the shock of war comes, and I only pray that it may not come in a form to surprise us before our General, whoever he may be, has time to reorganize his forces; but my distrust of anything but war awakening us, is no reason why we should let our friends sleep contentedly in a fool's paradise, and therefore I would not cease to warn them of the risks they are running by persisting in their present course of aimless and costly inactivity.

Secondly, whatever troops you have got,—good, bad, or indifferent,—ought not to be locked up, as so many thousands of them now are, in watching Powers like Sindia, the Nizam, and Holkar. It is high time that these Princes should feel and understand that their interests are identical with ours, and that they ought not to absorb 10,000 European troops in watching them, or in keeping them upon their thrones. But they will never understand this, unless you can infuse into our political servants something of the old spirit which Lord Mayo so clearly showed was not dead nor incapable of revival. All the troops at the capitals I have mentioned should be capable of withdrawal, with a certainty that the ruler would be able and willing to protect himself and our friends at his own capital. I believe you



may make these Princes as loyal and as little desirous of change as our own dukes, and the sooner we set about it the better.

Thirdly, again, I think you should pay more attention in the Political Department to your lines of military communication. The Indus Valley and Rajpootana lines are still incomplete, and we have no lines of coast communication, except for a few hundred miles north from Bombay and south from Madras. I do not recollect for years past a single political paper of weight on this subject, and the political importance of completing the great trunk lines is discussed much as if they were lines to collieries or stone quarries to be decided on purely commercial principles. You know I am not insensible to the inestimable value of canals or common roads, but war has now become a matter of days and hours, and we may any day bitterly repent our tardiness in completing the great strategical lines, which, after all, are identical with the great commercial lines of arterial communication.

Neither can I recollect any careful discussion in the Political Department since I have been in Council, on the various schemes of what seems to me most unwise military centralization which have from time to time been put forward regarding the constitution of the Native Army—for abolishing all but one dockyard, one gunpowder factory, one-gun carriage factory, and in other ways putting all your eggs into one basket. These things are usually discussed in the Military and Financial Departments, where, of course, their importance is very great, but it is vital in the Political Department, which is very rarely if ever consulted.

I hardly expect to carry you with me in my last suggestion, that you should permanently uproot the Viceroy, both from Calcutta and Simla; let him by all means have palaces there, and in every other great division of the Empire, but let his habitual resort be on your western sea-coast, or your north-western frontier, and let the permanent offices of his Government be at some place like Nassiek, where Campbell showed long ago they ought to be put in a defensible position, close to the coast, in a climate where your clerks could live comfortably all the year round. You will think this a mofussilite crotchet. But, depend upon it, even a Bengal famine ought not to absorb the large share of the Viceroy's attention, which is always now habitually given to many local matters of less importance than that famine. Sixty millions of people, or 20, or even 10 millions, deserve as good a Governor as England can furnish, and as perfect an apparatus of administration specially devoted to local interests. Your Viceroy should never be called in, except to deal with really imperial questions. At present, he attempts to govern in detail half India, and the great Commissioners and Lieutenant-Governors, who were intended to be triennial or quinquennial Cæsars, are, by turns, left very much to their own devices, with a certainty that their measures will be upset within four years by their successors, or they are reduced to puppets by the direct interference of the Viceroy. If you keep a Viceroy at all, he can only be useful if he rules over an India divided



somewhat after Bright's fashion into a federation of kingdoms, each furnished with complete apparatus of administration, so framed as to be capable of continuing uniform traditions of policy. You must, as Lord Elphinstone said, build your great Eastern Empire as you build your great iron ships, in separate compartments, which you can isolate in case of necessity.

Lastly, I would not trouble the Governor-General with the affairs of Persia, Arabia, or Africa; they are all affairs of Indian rather than European interest; but the attempt to rule them from Simla or Calcutta is a delusion. The only effectual means of dealing with the European interests they all involve resides in our Houses of Parliament and Cabinet, and ought to be dealt with in Westminster, and as directly by the Secretary of State for India as your Indian ship-building affairs at Wapping.

Affairs at Aden and Bushire may then have some interest for an English Cabinet and Parliament. At present they have none, and the real interests of India are sacrificed in a vain attempt to maintain the sham of control from the Viceroy, who is powerless to do more than advise or remonstrate, when the Indian interests of his charge do not exactly coincide with European interests, or when his appeals disturb the quiet slumbers of our insular public. He has, indeed, the power to get you into an European imbroglio, with the hope of making you pull him through, and excuse his taking the only means he has of really rousing his countrymen's attention; but this is not an expedient of which you would wish to encourage the frequent use.

I have gone on writing till my note has extended to sheets which required copying, and you may wish that I had put it in print, when it would at least have been legible. But it is not all for the public, and there are perhaps some things in it which you may like to lay before Lord Salisbury as opinions of one who has long, as an old Indian Warden of the Marches, had his attention directed to these matters.

Believe me,

Dear Kaye,

Ever sincerely yours,

H. B. E. FRERE.

Sir John Kaye, K.C.S.I.









## II. MEMORANDUM BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD LAWRENCE ON THE CENTRAL ASIAN QUESTION.

I have lately read an important paper on the Central Asian question written by Sir Bartle Frere, in the shape of a letter to Sir John Kaye, dated the 12th of June last.

This letter, though couched in a private and familiar form, has been printed and circulated among the Members of the Council of India, and seems doubtless intended for general, though, perhaps confidential, consideration. I have an unfeigned respect for the high character and great abilities of Sir Bartle Frere, and I know that he has given much attention to the subject with which he deals; but differing as I do on some points in the views which he has enunciated, I am desirous of availing myself of this opportunity of giving my reasons for the conclusions at which I have arrived.

I do not think that it is too much for me to say that I am acquainted with the policy which has been adopted on our North-Western Frontier of India since our first movement on Caubul in 1838; and that for the last 28 years in particular, I have taken a more or less active part in carrying out that policy. I have also been personally acquainted with many of the best Officers who survived the disasters of the first Caubul war, as well as with most of the Officers who have been employed on the North-Western Frontier. I have also more than once examined the whole border lying along the Punjab, as far as the confines of Scinde; and I have had many opportunities of studying the character of the Chiefs and people of our frontier districts and the adjacent hills. I have also met and conferred with some of the leading men of late years among the Afghans, among whom were Amir Dost Muhummud Khan, his sons, Muhummud Ayder Khan and Azim Khan, and others. I only mention these things, in order to show that I have had adequate opportunities of forming distinct conclusions on the points which I propose to discuss; but whether these conclusions are really sound or otherwise, must be left to the judgment of those, who have now to decide on the momentous issues involved in the question, of what should be the future policy of English statesmen as regards the Central Asian question.

I quite concur in much which Sir Bartle Frere has advanced as regards the force of circumstances which have led Russia, step by step, from one acquisition to another in Central Asia. It has an obvious parallel with our progress in India. I agree also in Sir Bartle Frere's views, that England ought not to make the permanent occupation of Merv on the part of Russia a *casus belli* between the two countries. And though I quite admit that the approach of Russia towards our Indian possessions is fraught with future trouble and danger, I do not see that we can do much more than watch events for the present, and be



guided by circumstances, as they arise. There is ample room and verge enough for both England and Russia in the vast territories which they respectively occupy, to enforce security, to extend commerce, and to spread civilization, if the prejudices and passions, arising from the rivalry of races, do not interfere, and impel the two nations to endeavour to thwart each other. While, therefore, I am an advocate for adopting, from time to time, such precautions as prudence and foresight may dictate, as essential to the security of our hold on India, I deprecate any line of policy which may give needless offence to Russia; and I would more especially weigh carefully the arguments which are advanced against the policy which has hitherto been pursued, and in favour of any material change in that policy.

Sir Bartle Frere seems to think that there is a general feeling in India that a change of policy is desirable. He describes the policy which has hitherto prevailed as not only stationary, and only nominally defensive, but purely negative. He tells us what may be considered as the Oriental view of such a policy, and then explains the changes which he would advocate. I do not give much weight to the alleged changes in public opinion. Military men are too often disposed to advocate forward movements, as conducive to their professional advancement. Merchants are naturally advocates of the extension of trade; and men of science love to see the spread of knowledge of distant lands. Hence arises a feeling to despise what looks like a policy of inaction. But do these gentlemen carefully calculate the probable results of the policy which they advocate? Do they duly consider the difficulties and complications which may follow the adoption of the course which they support? How general was the view in favour of the policy of the first advance on Afghanistan. How distasteful, however, did the occupation of the country in a short time become among our Officers and soldiers, whether English or Natives; and how great was the outcry when we met with disaster? I do not myself set much value on Native opinion in India on the Central Asian question. Few Natives know anything of real value on the subject. They have not been behind the scenes. They have not really studied the subject. Their views are for the most part the mere reflex of the opinions which they find in the English newspapers in India, and which often appear in the Native papers months after they have been read in our own. No doubt many intelligent Natives are anxious on the subject of a Russian invasion of India, and many of them would gladly see measures adopted to prevent what, if successful, would prove a grievous misfortune to the country. But I do not think that they have ever fairly considered what is the best course to adopt to ward off the threatened danger, or have any conception of the cost which an occupation of Afghanistan would involve.

My objections to the policy which Sir Bartle Frere appears to advocate is, that it would not be effectual to stop an invasion, should such a movement on the part of Russia ever be attempted in force. That it would in all probability lead to difficulties and complications,



such as we experienced in 1838 in Afghanistan, and that it would, in this way, prove ruinous to the finances of India. My views on this subject closely agree with the sentiments of Lord Derby, as expressed in the debate of last year on the motion of Lord Napier and Ettrick. For all useful purposes the boundaries of Afghanistan are sufficiently well defined. It is not, I believe, good for the Afghans themselves that they should feel that we are absolutely bound to protect them. Such a feeling might lead them to a line of conduct very detrimental to their own interests, and certainly to ours. It is sufficient for them to know that, to a considerable extent, our interests accord with theirs. We must, however, be the sole judges of how and when we shall help them in an emergency, such as an invasion by Russia. The great point in this matter is, that Russia should understand that England is prepared to defend her hold on India at any cost. Nothing short of this will suffice, if the march of events brings Russia towards the frontier of India; but that conviction of England's resolution will, I believe, prove quite effectual.

Sir Bartle Frere expresses an opinion that the policy inaugurated by Lord Mayo effected a great change in that which had previously existed. I wish in no way to detract from the merits of Lord Mayo's acts. But, in point of fact, that nobleman appears to me to have taken up, and carried out the policy which had been laid down, and adopted previous to his arrival in India. We had recognized the Amir's recovery of his power; we had assisted him with money and arms; and we had invited him to the meeting at Ambhalah, which Lord Mayo so admirably carried out. Lord Mayo himself, in a letter to me written after he had heard the details of the debate in the House of Lords in 1859 on the above question, only said that he thought we should have to give more frequent help to Amir Shere Ali than I appeared to have contemplated. In this remark I conceive that Lord Mayo pointed to the payment of a regular subsidy. If so, he certainly went beyond my views; but I am not aware that this policy has been adopted, and, if so, I am disposed to think that it will not prove an improvement on mine.

Sir Bartle Frere deprecates the policy which the Government of India and the authorities in the Punjab pursued towards the Afghans up to the time that the late Sir Herbert Edwardes brought about overtures, which led to the renewal of amicable relations with Amir Dost Muhummud, the Ruler of Caubul. But in judging of this policy, the conduct of that Chief and his previous relations to the British Government must be borne in mind. After the conclusion of the second Afghan war, we made such *amende* to Amir Dost Muhummud Khan as was in our power. We restored him and his family to freedom, and sent them in honour to their own country. In 1846, we allowed his brother, Sultan Muhummud Khan, whom we found under strict surveillance at Lahore, to go back to influence and wealth at Peshawur and Kohat. Notwithstanding these good offices, Sultan Muhummud betrayed to the Sikhs our Officers, who had taken refuge with him, after the Sikh troops broke out at Peshawur, though he was



in a position at Kohat to have protected them without any real risk to himself. At the battle of Guzerat we found a chosen body of Afghan cavalry under Sirdar Akram Khan, one of the sons of the Amir, arrayed against us. No attempt at reconciliation came for years from the Amir to our Government: and assuredly it would not have been wise for us to have made a move of that kind towards him in the first instance. Such a step would have revived all the natural arrogance of the Afghan character, and have led to pretensions for the recovery of Peshawur, which we could not have admitted.

Then again, when in 1855 we accepted his overtures for reconciliation, we did all we fairly could to efface the remembrance of the past. We received his son, Sirdar Hyder Khan, whom he had chosen as his heir-apparent. We entered into a treaty with the Amir; and we gave him large assistance in the shape of arms and money, which enabled him eventually to recover Herat. No doubt Dost Muhummud Khan was, for an Afghan, a wise and far-seeing Chief. Nevertheless, by selecting a younger son as his successor, he sowed the seeds of the intestine commotions which broke out at his death, and went nigh to ruin the Baruckyye family. It was with the utmost difficulty that, with all his courage, force of character, and prestige, that he maintained a hollow peace between his kinsmen and sons. He was scarcely dead when they were at the throats of each other.

Sirdar Hyder Khan died before his father, and on his death Sirdar Shere Ali, a son of the same mother, became heir-apparent, to the prejudice of the elder brothers. It was the party of these brothers, Sirdars Afzul Khan and Azum Khan, who had first made overtures to Sir Herbert Edwardes, no doubt with an eye to the commotions which they knew would follow the father's death. And it was these Chiefs who felt especially aggrieved that we did not take their part against Shere Ali. It is true that the policy we adopted was ill received by both parties. But what ought we to have done, except what we did do? Were we to repeat the error of past years, when we supported the Suddozyes against Amir Dost Muhummud Khan? Was it not rather the right course to follow the advice—I may say the entreaty—of the old Amir Dost Muhummud Khan, when he took leave of me in 1857, to leave the Afghans alone to settle their own disputes, to fight their own battles among themselves?

I do not think that the Afghans as a nation would tolerate the presence of British officers in Afghanistan directing their politics, giving their Chiefs advice, drilling their troops, and the like. The ruler of the day, if hard pressed by enemies, may give his consent to such a system, but he will do so most unwillingly, and only for the sake of the money and arms he would obtain; and he would be sorely tempted, as opportunity offered, to try and get rid of them. I am afraid that the advice which Sir Bartle Frere suggests would in the end lead to war, and would at any rate turn the Afghans against us. A discontented party could easily bring the ruler of the country into disgrace with us, by causing the assassination of some of our officers, or even by attempting it.



Sir Bartle Frere speaks in terms of disparagement of the border policy of the Punjab Government, though he thinks that this policy has improved within the last ten years. I believe that the policy of the present day is very much the same as that which dates from 1846, the period of the annexation of the Punjab, and which has been approved of by the various Governments of India since that time, as well as by the home authorities. The only apparent difference will, I believe, be found to arise from the success of that policy. The border tribes from time immemorial plundered and laid waste the lands in the vicinity of the mountain ranges. They were only held in check by the strong hand of power. In the first instance we did all we could to reconcile, to deter, to prevent the plunder of border lands, and the captivity or murder of the inhabitants. When every other measure failed, we carried the war into the strongholds of the enemy; and this policy, on the whole, has been remarkably successful. We have in some instances become friends of the very tribes we have thus punished. All war is, of course, an evil. But there are greater evils than even war. Why should it be wrong to burn a village, if that will help to maintain the security of the border? If we aspire to rule, we must give protection to our subjects, however difficult it may be to do so. Is it more cruel to burn the stronghold of an enemy who has wantonly injured our people, than to cut them up by tens, and even hundreds, when we meet them in the open ground? But we did not enter the hills simply to burn and destroy; we entered the hills to punish, and if, in so doing, we destroyed the abodes of robbers and murderers, I submit that we did right in so acting. In the most civilized nations, the combatants do not hesitate on many occasions to burn and destroy. Do they not bombard? Do they not mine, and blow up with little regard to those who suffer? All such severities, however lamentable, are at times necessary, from the character of the people and from the circumstances with which we have had to deal in such parts of India as those of the North-west Frontier. In some cases, as I have myself seen, a tribe, when attacked will set fire to their huts and sheds—for such are the real character of their habitations—and will also destroy their garnered crops, rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the attacking force. The arrangements for the protection of the Punjab Frontier have, I repeat, on the whole been successful, and have exercised a moral influence which showed itself in the Mutiny in 1857, when we were not only able to disarm seven regiments of Hindostanees at Peshawur and one at Dera Ismail Khan, but also to send a large portion of the Punjab force to Delhi. We also raised considerable bodies of men from those very tribes, and sent them to Hindostan.

Sir Bartle Frere appears to think that we did all we could to weaken the authority of the Ruler of Caubul with his frontier Chiefs, and to neutralize his power by sowing distrust among them. This is a strange accusation. The border Chiefs on the Punjab frontier, whether in the hills or in the plains, as a rule, owe no allegiance to, and recognize no authority on the part of, the Amirs of Caubul. In



bygone days it is true that the dominion of the great Persian and Afghan rulers extended over these parts, though even then, in the difficult districts of the hills it was more or less nominal. But these days have long gone by. The inhabitants of the plains and valleys along the Punjab border are, almost without exception, British subjects: and the hill men are, in like manner, for the most part independent. I know of no Chief except the head of the Lalpoore clan, on the north-western side of the Peshawur Valley, who recognizes the authority of Caubul. And it is a curious circumstance that, though this tribe has been guilty of various acts of misconduct against us, and even have laid wait and murdered English Officers, we have never sent an expedition against them. The hill tribes of the North-Western Frontier of India are Mahomedans, and are in many instances of the same races as the people of Caubul, and therefore have feelings of sympathy in common with the latter, but are not the subjects of its ruler, and are jealous of their own independence.

Sir Bartle Frere revives the old question of the occupation of Quetta. I know that some able men are of his opinion, and in favour of that measure. It seems, however, to me to be an unwise step both in a political and military point of view. It will, I think, do much to revive and strengthen the old jealousy of the Afghans, and lead them to think that we contemplate the re-occupation of their country.

It is, I believe, the case that those who advocate the occupation of Quetta contemplate an advance on Candahar and Herat. What would be the strength of the force, and what would be the cost of carrying out such measures? If we are to meet an invasion by Russia, nothing under an army of 30,000 men, largely composed of Englishmen, would suffice. What would be the cost of half that force operating at a distance from its supplies and resources?

I wish to speak with diffidence on the military side of the question of occupying Quetta. But I have strong convictions on it also. That position would be an outwork, pushed far beyond the ordinary line of our frontier defences, on the North-Western border of India. The position must be held in considerable strength, and be well supported, or it might lead to disaster in the face of a formidable enemy. A weak post at Quetta would invite attack and court insult.

A post at Quetta in view of resisting invasion such as is contemplated ought not to consist of less than a brigade of all arms in a strong fortification. It should also be supported by a force ready to move forward at very short notice. A brigade at Quetta could not safely operate on the flank of a formidable army moving by way of Caubul on India through the Khyber Pass. Were Quetta not strongly held, it might be destroyed by a sudden onslaught as the invaders advanced. Such arguments seem to me to be of additional strength should we advance beyond Quetta.

To occupy Quetta securely entails a re-arrangement of the occupation of Scinde, and of a considerable increase of the force in that province, and probably of the Bombay Army. Scinde has a climate very inimical to the health of all foreign troops, and more especially



of English soldiers. It used to be held in detestation by our Hindostanee troops, and was the first occasion on which Hindostanee soldiers showed a disinclination to our service.

Every change in locality to our military cantonments in India involves the expenditure of much time, money, and trouble which can be ill spared. Thus, after much careful consideration we decided, eight years ago, to reduce the force in the Peshawur valley, and place a considerable portion of it in reserve on the left side of the Indus. This was done on sanitary grounds. The troops had been found to suffer much from the climate of the valley. To this day these arrangements have not been carried out. The defences necessary for leaving a small force in a secure position have not been nearly completed.

A cantonment at Quetta, such as the circumstances of the case require, would probably cost half a million of money, perhaps a good deal more. Workmen and material would have to be collected from a distance. The arrangements for a support in Scinde would likewise entail a large expenditure. A railway to the foot of the Bolan Pass, such as has been suggested, and a good road onwards, would represent a couple of millions more. The pass must be held by posts all through. No doubt if these arrangements are essential to the safety of India, they should be carried out. But is this the case? Would our hold of India be really increased to any appreciable extent?

I am still in favour of the policy which has hitherto prevailed, subject, of course, to such modifications as time and circumstances may dictate. Let us do what may be necessary, in a reasonable way, to conciliate the Afghans. Let us watch events, and deal with them as they occur. This is no inactive, no negative policy in the true sense of the term. It is really, I submit, a watchful and defensive policy. The employment of Natives beyond our frontier is, I consider, a far more safe, and at least an equally effective mode of obtaining information, and is free from the risks of employing Englishmen in such places. We have acted on this principle with fair success for the last 20 years.

There are other points in Sir Bartle Frere's letter in which I regret that I do not concur, but I have tried to confine my remarks to those which bear on the Central Asian question, and these have led me to say more than I would otherwise have wished.

LAWRENCE.

*Brockett Hall, Herts, 4th Nov. 1874.*

Since I wrote this Memorandum, I have seen the "Moral and Material Progress Report of 1869-70, presented to Parliament;" and I suggest, that any one interested in the question of the Punjab frontier policy should read pages 53, 54, and 55 of that Report.—L.







III.—SIR BARTLE FREERE'S NOTE ON LORD LAWRENCE'S MEMORANDUM  
ON THE CENTRAL ASIAN QUESTION, DATED 4TH NOVEMBER, 1874.

The main questions described in my letter to Sir John Kaye, and the memorandum of Lord Lawrence on that letter, are not questions of authority or opinion, but of fact, and on some of the most important facts all are now agreed.

It is admitted that Russia is approaching our Indian possessions, and that such approach is "fraught," as Lord Lawrence says, "with future trouble and danger." He adds, "I do not see that we can do much more than watch events for the present, and be guided by circumstances as they arise."

It is natural to ask how long are we to watch? what are we to watch for, or expect? and what are the objects to which we are to be guided by circumstances? Agreed that we need not object to Russia occupying Khiva or even Merv, nor to her crushing the power for evil of the Turkoman robbers, is the subjection of Affghanistan proper to Russian influence an event to be welcomed and desired? or is it to be viewed by us with distrust and alarm? Is it a circumstance which is to guide us to any, and to what, course of action or abstinence?

I can quite concur in all that Lord Lawrence says as to there being "ample room and verge enough" for both England and Russia in their respective Eastern possessions, &c., &c. But the question is not for the present what either Russia or England are to do in the possessions of the other power, but how they are to act with regard to those intermediate states which separate the possessions of the two Powers? We may assure ourselves that we have no desire to transgress our boundaries, or to meddle with the Affghans, but have we any such assurance as regards the Russians? Are they less inclined to advance and domineer in Affghanistan than in Persia, Khiva, or Bokhara, and if they are not less inclined, are they likely to be less successful? and, whether they are successful or not, is their attempting such interference a matter of indifference to us in India?

Lord Lawrence would, like all of us, advocate the adoption "from time to time of such precautions as prudence and foresight may dictate as essential to the security of our hold on India." One can indeed hardly imagine any Englishman who would advocate anything which did not come within this somewhat wide definition, but the question is what do "prudence and foresight" now dictate?

Lord Lawrence's only suggestion is a negative one. He would "deprecate any line of policy which may give needless offence to Russia." But what is the policy which would give "needless offence" to Russia?



My object has always been to avoid giving "needless offence" to let our agents meet the Russian agents somewhat further off than in the very valley of the Indus, and to deal with them, wherever we meet them, as we deal with them and other nations which are sometimes inclined to annex the possessions of their weaker neighbours in Europe.

We do not covet territory in Affghanistan any more than on the Continent of Europe; but it does not suit us that our weaker immediate neighbours should be swallowed up by the stronger military Powers, and there can be no doubt that, if such annexation were rashly attempted against the will of the smaller Powers in Europe, it would be clearly for our interest to remonstrate in the only tone to which great military Powers are apt to pay any attention.

This could hardly be called giving "needless offence." If a firm and temperate remonstrance did give offence, without checking aggression, we should probably think it high time to go further, and to resist by force a spirit of encroachment which, if persevered in, might end by leaving to the English Sovereign and Parliament not much more than their predecessors ruled over in the time of the Heptarchy.

But, however far we might carry a policy of abstaining from giving offence, here in Europe, where we are entrenched behind seas over which our navies still give us the command, it is clear that in India our position would be very much altered for the worse, and become rather precarious, if Affghanistan were under Russian influence and freely permeated by Russian agents and influence, whilst no English envoy could show his face over our own border. It is a fair question to ask whether what is called the "policy" of the past contemplated any effectual steps to prevent such a result? If it did, what were the steps? and when were they taken, or intended to be taken? If any definite idea of any such steps existed in the minds of those who directed the councils of our Indian Government before Lord Mayo's time, still more if those steps were likely to be effectual, then I am free to confess there was no change of policy consequent on Lord Mayo's assumption of the Government of India. But then I must at the same time confess that I had, in common, I believe, with most men who studied the policy of "masterly inactivity," entirely failed to get any definite idea of its objects and characteristics.

Lord Lawrence very much mistakes my views regarding changes of opinion in India. The change which seemed to me portentous was the change in the views of men like Mr. Aitchison, Mr. de la Poer Wynne, and others, formerly, I believe, strong advocates of the policy of "masterly inactivity," but latterly, I am assured, equally strong in urging on the Government of Her Majesty measures which seemed to me very likely to involve us in a European, as well as an Asiatic war, without effectually checking the Russian approach to India. Whatever weight might be given to their opinions *per se*, it seemed to me a very ominous fact that men in such positions as



they held under the Government of India should advocate such measures. Such changes of opinion seemed to me to deserve much more attention than the changes in "public opinion," to which Lord Lawrence says he attaches little weight, because he considers that military men are fond of wars, and are, for different reasons, joined by merchants and men of science in advocating an advance.

I will not discuss what he says of the value to be attributed to the opinions of those classes of men, for I was not thinking specially of them; nor will I consider his objections to an occupation of Afghanistan, for I not only never recommended such a measure, as Lord Lawrence seems to imply, but my whole argument was directed against its necessity. I would, however, say a word on his remarks on Native opinion in India on the Central Asian question.

I do not generally agree with the view Lord Lawrence expresses of Native opinion in India. I confess I attach much more importance to it than he seems to think necessary, but I certainly never looked to it for direction as to what we should do. I hold that whether we despise it or not, it is certain that intelligent natives know better than we do what other natives are thinking about in India; that if there is a wide-spread opinion that the Russians or any other power inimical to us "are coming," we may feel sure that a number of our subjects and allies, not small nor despicable in strength, are filled with hopes of some change which will be, as they fancy, in some way to their advantage; that a much larger portion, who are indifferent as to who are their rulers, are alarmed, and prepared to hedge their allegiance, that only a portion will be quiescent, and a yet smaller portion so influenced and disciplined as to be actively on the side of order and of the foreign Government of England.

I do not say that the prospect is one which need alarm a ruler with a machinery of government so well organized and loyal as that of India, and with the power of England at his back; but if he is wise he will, in such a case, prepare for stormy times, and will walk warily, as a man who knows that hidden mines may at any moment explode at his feet or around him.

What is it that a Viceroy at such a time may reckon with certainty on hearing from his Political Agents, and Residents, his Magistrates, Commissioners, and other officers of our Government who feel the pulse of the Native community, and who report confidentially on "Native opinion" when stirred by news that the Russians were advancing, not on us necessarily, but on our immediate neighbours? How many of his Agents would report that they could hold their own, and spare any troops in their neighbourhood to form an army of observation on the Indus? How many would write doubtfully of the loyalty of their leading Native Chiefs, or of their capacity to hold in check the elements of disorder within their own capitals? how many would report serious suspicions of disaffection among influential chiefs or classes, and ask that the military force at hand might not be reduced, even if they did not beg it might be strengthened?



I apprehend that the number of our political officers who would be classed in this last category has been greatly augmented during the last fifteen years, since it has been a fashionable doctrine that no Native Chief can be trusted; and since any expression of sympathy with such Chiefs, or belief in their trustworthiness as allies, has been likely to ensure a black mark against any Political Agent's name as a crotchety, credulous, or imbecile public servant.

Lord Lawrence knows how difficult it was to collect the very small force needed for the Umbeyla affair. How are we better situated now for assembling a force which, to be of any effect, should be five times as large and capable of rapid concentration? He will, I am sure, on reflection, admit that in such times as we are speaking of, "Native opinion" is a very important element in the calculation of every official, from the Viceroy downwards, and that, however little suggestive it may be of the best course to follow, it is very important to know what "Native opinion" says as an element of the difficulties we have to meet; still more important to assure "Native opinion" that we, the English Government, are on the winning side.

This can scarcely be done by simply saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

The only way to obviate risks from an exaggerated and erroneous Native opinion is to inform it, and nothing can be so useful to this end as a clear and distinct intimation that we see, and are fully alive to, the danger which all the world outside the Government Offices sees, and that we are resolved and prepared vigorously to meet it.

Lord Lawrence does not define "the policy which Sir Bartle Frere appears to advocate." But, from the objections he states to it, I feel sure he must have misapprehended what I would advise. Briefly, my advice is to deal with Affghanistan very much as we deal with Belgium or Holland,—States interposed between us and great military Powers which are from time to time tempted to absorb them,—States anxiously alive to such danger from gigantic neighbours, and not possessed of such military power as would enable them to resist such absorption if it were seriously attempted.

We profess no protectorate of Holland or Belgium; we arrogate no exclusive influence; we assert no right to dictate in their internal affairs, nor even to advise, unasked, on questions of external policy; above all, we keep studiously clear of promises to make common cause in their defence.

Our policy is to give, when occasion invites it, sound and disinterested advice, if not always in favour of peace, yet clearly against any provocation of war,—to establish a conviction of our thorough disinterestedness, of the absence of all desire to form relations other than those of friendliness and good neighbourhood,—to convince the weaker Power of our earnest desire to secure its complete independence, whilst we let both the weaker Powers and their stronger neighbours assure themselves that we feel such identity of interests in the maintenance of the existing state of things, that we should regard any attempt at its forcible infringement as a matter of grave offence to



ourselves, and that it is at least very probable that we might resent such attempt in a fashion not lightly to be provoked by even the most ambitious and self-confident of great military Powers.

Something of this sort has been, I believe, the policy and aim and the general language of Her Majesty's Government ever since the danger of aggression from great military Powers, for their own purposes irrespective of treaties, first began to overshadow the smaller Powers of Europe. It must, I think, have had some effect in restraining aggression, even when the opportunities were very tempting; and I cannot see why, in a somewhat more pronounced form, as befits our greater interest in the question, it should not be equally effectual in Affghanistan.

It can hardly be such a policy as this which Lord Lawrence supposes I advocated, for it could not lead to "difficulties and complications such as we experienced in 1838 in Affghanistan." Its object is the very reverse of leading the Affghans to "feel that we are absolutely bound to protect them." If it did not stop an invasion of India, it would at least delay it, and enable us to know it was coming, and to prepare to meet it, and it has the merit of in no way impeding more decisive action should we be driven to adopt it. Of course, if an invasion by Russia were "attempted in force," nothing but force would repel it. But I think the attitude I recommend might postpone such attempt very considerably, and place us in a better position to resist it when it came. Indeed, some impression of this kind seems to have occurred to Lord Lawrence when he observes (not quite consistently, I venture to think, with what goes before at the beginning of the same paragraph), "the great point is, that Russia should understand that England is prepared to defend her hold on India at any cost. Nothing short of this will suffice if the march of events brings Russia towards the frontier of India; but that conviction of England's resolution will, I believe, prove quite effectual." A clear, public, and precise expression of this determination is an essential part of what I recommended. But I cannot find that such an expression was ever made public in a manner to reach the Affghans, certainly not before Lord Mayo's meeting with Shere Ali at Umballa.

Lord Lawrence argues that no change took place in the policy of the British Government towards the Affghans, consequent on Lord Mayo's accession to the Viceroyalty, that Lord Mayo simply carried out the policy which had been laid down and adopted previous to his arrival in India.

If this be the case, I apprehend Shere Ali and all the Affghans are among those who have shared my mistake.

But I cannot think the facts bear out Lord Lawrence's view of the matter.

During his visit to Umballa, Shere Ali persistently dwelt on the mischief which had been done in Affghanistan by the brusque announcement to his predecessor that we should look to nothing in Affghanistan but the actual possession of power; a declaration which he frequently affirmed was equivalent to an invitation to all comers to



contest the possession of the throne, and was, in fact, holding out a premium on rebellion.

Much may have been due to the personal bearing of Lord Mayo and the courtesy of his treatment of his guest.

But Shere Ali clearly received the impression at Umballa that the British Government would treat him as a friend, as long as he remained friendly to us; and that Lord Mayo had abandoned the policy of recognizing no title to his friendship save success in contending for the supreme power in Affghanistan: of doing nothing till the Russian influence had become dominant in Affghanistan, and then not till we had found by experience that the Russians would not remain content on the Affghan side of the passes leading down to the Indus.

I have always believed that Lord Mayo gave Shere Ali to understand, if he did not say in so many words, what he stated without reserve to those of his own countrymen who were in his confidence. He felt quite strong enough to meet the Russians in Central Asia, and there to dispute with them the empire of India, if it suited us better to make Central Asia the field of battle, than to await the Russians in the passes of the Hindu Koosh, or on the plains of Hindostan. He believed that he could repel any attempt at an invasion of India, and make it a disastrous failure to any one who attempted it. But he had no wish to advance or to precipitate such a contest. Russia was doing her work of civilization and consolidation of her empire, as we had done ours; and we had no desire to prevent or impede her as long she did not cross us. He greatly valued a friendly ally in the Ruler of Affghanistan, and would do a great deal actively to support him, without pledging us to any identity of action with the Affghans. The Amir might rely on our support, when he needed it, in any difficulties not brought upon him by his own action, as long as he remained true and friendly to us; and he need have little fear of other neighbours whilst he remained identified in interest and policy with us.

Such, no doubt, were Shere Ali's impressions of Lord Mayo's views and intentions after the Umballa meeting. How much of these impressions were derived from Lord Mayo's own words, and how much from what the Amir saw and heard in other ways during his visit, is of little moment. He went back home, if not satisfied that he had got all he wanted, at least reassured, and confident that, whilst Lord Mayo was Viceroy, he might rely on the good offices of the Indian Government for something more than advice; and he decided to lean more on us than on the Russians, as being the more powerful and disinterested neighbours.

Whether he had this assurance before the Umballa meeting, Lord Lawrence can judge; but whether he has had it since, is the more important question; and the most important of all is, What are now the Amir's views towards us and towards the Russians, and how should they influence our present action?

These are important questions not easily answered without a very recent and accurate knowledge of the state of feeling at Cabul.



Events have marched so rapidly since I wrote to Sir John Kaye in June last, that many things then possible, notably as regards Herat, have now become more difficult; but every succeeding mail has confirmed the impression I have for years entertained, that we are very badly represented by our agents in Afghanistan.

I have no personal acquaintance with the Native Agents who live at Cabul and supply periodical digests of news to the Commissioner at Peshawur, and who convey letters and messages from the Viceroy to the Amir. I judge them only from the abstracts of their correspondence, which are, I conclude, weeded of much extraneous and trifling matter before they are printed and sent home; but, even in the shape in which those abstracts reach us, I find a vast portion of Durbar gossip in proportion to the important items of intelligence which the most ordinary newswriter at a Native Court cannot help sometimes transmitting. I find no scale of proportion by which to estimate the relative value and probability of the important and unimportant, the undoubted, the doubtful, and the mere hearsay items of intelligence; still less do I find any discriminating description of persons, such as may assist the Viceroy and his advisers in judging of men and events.

We have, as far as I am aware, no means of judging whether the items of intelligence are judiciously and exhaustively collected, and faithfully and promptly reported, but, supposing they fulfil all these necessary conditions, they seem to me to be no better than the reports of an ordinary akbarnavess, or newswriter, such a man as we should never think of trusting in critical times as our only means of communication, with a third-class Native Durbar in India.

To one who knows the Court and people every scrap of such intelligence may be useful, but I can imagine nothing less likely to give to any one else any useful idea of what is going on at Cabul, or to convey to persons at a distance any correct picture of the actors in a very important drama.

But, whoever is our Agent at Cabul, must be, to some extent, the medium of confidential communication between the Viceroy and the Amir, and the Native gentlemen we now employ must be different from any one of the same class I ever met with, if the Amir trusts him as he would trust an English gentleman.

A man in the Amir's position knows well that he can trust almost any English Officer who comes to him as representative of the English Government. But he will not, as a rule, trust one of his own countrymen till he has, as he believes, secured our Agent's interest on his own side, so that the Agent becomes rather *his* Agent than ours.

For these, and many other reasons of the same kind, I should consider the first necessity at Cabul to be an English Officer as Envoy and representative of the Viceroy.

On former occasions, when this step was urged on the Government of India, it was resisted on the ground that our Envoy and his attachés would not be safe from attempts on their lives by fanatical



or ill-disposed persons, and that the ruler of the country could not guarantee their safety.

I have never believed in the validity of this objection, and I should consider it quite chimerical, unless it were formally stated by the Ruler himself. In that case, I should point out to him the absurdity of his calling himself the Ruler of a country where he could not ensure the safety of an honoured guest. I should decline to communicate with him, save through a representative accredited like our Envoys at other Asiatic Courts, and I should state clearly the impossibility of our talking of friendly relations with a nation where our representative would not be welcomed.

But I am assured, on what I believe is very good authority, that there was nothing for which Shere Ali was more anxious, when he met Lord Mayo, than that the Viceroy should appoint as his permanent representative in Affghanistan some Officer with whom the Ameer could unreservedly communicate.

Whether I have been misinformed on this point or not, I am very certain that the first thing to be done towards placing our relations with the Affghans on a satisfactory footing is to make them ask for the presence of such a representative, and, if this cannot be done, if it is impossible so far to secure their confidence, then I am willing to admit either that there is something in our relations with the Affghans essentially different from our relations with any other Asiatic Power which needs our support and assistance; or else that other influence has already been established by some other Power, whose interest it is to shut us out of Affghanistan.

The latter would be, to my mind, as grave a position of affairs as could be imagined short of *actual war*.

Of course there is always some danger to every British or other civilized Envoy at an Asiatic Court, where the life of the reigning sovereign is not always safe.

An attempt to destroy Metcalfe and his escort was the foundation of Runjeet Singh's respect for the British. The victories of Seetabuldee and Kirkee were the results of formal attacks upon a British Residency, and I imagine there is hardly a Political Officer of any experience who cannot call to mind other attempts of the same kind on a smaller scale, and at less important conjunctions.

But this has been, and ever must be, the normal condition of our Envoys to semi-civilized Powers, and we may at once leave India if we cannot find qualified Envoys who will undertake the duty without thinking more of the risk of assassination than they would of fevers at Rome or of consumption at Munich.

Of course the Envoy must be carefully chosen. The best man in the Indian political service will find ample scope for his ability in a position which seems to me, at this moment, scarcely less important than that of Her Majesty's Envoy at St. Petersburg or Constantinople. He must be temperate and judicious, as well as able in all other respects, and, above all, apt to win and retain confidence.

I believe such men abound in our service, and that the Viceroy



would find no difficulty in laying his hand on men every way fitted to represent him on the Russian frontier of Affghanistan.

It is not necessary that the Envoy should be permanently stationed at, or even near Cabul; it would be quite sufficient if he is in a position where he can freely hold personal communication with the Amir, and the Amir's wishes should be carefully consulted before deciding on the place of the Envoy's residence, and the strength of the British escort to be attached to his mission. All these matters might be easily arranged by the Viceroy, in personal communication with the Amir, or by the Envoy as soon as he met the Amir.

One of the first duties of the Envoy should be to obtain from the Amir such a commercial treaty as shall assure to us at least equal advantages with any other nation in trading with Affghanistan, and protect us against finding that vast territory closed to our commerce.

We are apt to forget that one of the principal motives of Russia, in her enlargement of empire in Asia, is commercial extension. It is a motive almost universally popular among the moneyed and commercial classes, who might otherwise demur to the burdens of growing empire. Two generations ago Lord Malmesbury reported that the jealousy of England which he found so potent at Berlin and St. Petersburg in the days of the Empress Catherine, was commercial not political; and so it is now. With very few exceptions, the Russian commercial and manufacturing classes believe their interests opposed to ours in Asia; we may see any day examples of this feeling in the ordinary commercial articles of the Russian press, and unless we secure by treaty perfect freedom of commerce and the commercial rights of the most favoured nation in Affghanistan, we may, any day, find the trade of that country closed to us. .

It needs no gift of prophecy to foresee the process. However well disposed the Amir may be to us at present, the time must come when a Russian Agent will be able to tempt either the Amir, or his probable successor, with large immediate advantages in return for a commercial treaty framed in the Russian interest. We may, of course, outbid the Russians, and by large offers secure the same advantages as the most favoured nation; but the balance of advantage is always on the side of the nation first in the field, and we may be met by such a feeling as the Atalik Ghazi is said to have lately expressed, that, "much as he liked us, he feared the Russians more; and must beg us to keep away, lest we should compromise him with his dreaded neighbours."

At present such trade and banking as exists in Affghanistan is almost entirely in the hands of British Indian subjects, natives generally of Sind, the Punjab, and Rajpootana. They rarely settle or take their families, but their commercial stake in the country is very large, and to them the effects of the extension of the Russian commercial system to the Indus Valley will be very important, and through them it will be felt very sensibly and permanently in every bazaar in Northern and Western India.

To us in India generally the result must be simply to pass from a period of peace establishments to a state of constant preparation for



war; for, with a Russian Agent with a treaty in his hand at Cabul, and his sub-agents all over the country to see that the treaty is observed, it will not rest with us to say when we will or will not be involved in actual hostilities.

We may find such a treaty in force, with little if any preliminary notice to us. The chances are that the Amir, if not very hard pressed, would prefer, before executing it, to see whether we would not outbid the Russians; but the Russians may bid very high, on condition of secrecy, or the treaty may be made with some aspirant to the succession, and not be made known till the aid which was stipulated for, as the price of commercial advantages to Russia, has been effectual in seating him on the musnud.

There are other moves open to Russia, in Persia, Tartary, and China, all of them leading to the same object—an ocean base, on unfrozen seas, in Asia,—and Russia may prefer one or more of those moves to at once pushing her Agents up to our Indus frontier; but the temptation of pushing on in Affghanistan, whilst we are shivering on the banks of the Indus, must be very great, and the Russian game is one which admits of many moves being made at once.

These are some of the reasons which induce me to think that one of our first steps should be to send a mission to the Ruler of Cabul, in charge of an Envoy who should remain in the country as the permanent representative of the Viceroy, and who should apply himself to occupy, with commercial and defensive conventions in our favour, the same ground which Russia will covet if it is not pre-occupied in British interests.

Out of the mission would naturally grow the establishment of British Officers or Agents, European and Native, at Candahar, Herat, Meshed, and possibly at other places, such as Balkh, and some point between that and the Thibet frontier of Cashmere. They should correspond with the Envoy to the Court of Cabul, and would, in fact, be his assistants or attachés. The Herat Agent should not be single-handed. He should have, as assistants, Military Officers well qualified to aid in the defence of the place should it ever be attacked.

It might then be possible for the Viceroy to feel confident not only that he was well represented in Affghanistan, but that he knew what was going on there. I cannot imagine that he can feel any such confidence now.

This course is clearly very different from anything Lord Lawrence could approve, but I would ask, What is the alternative? His suggestions to follow “the policy which has hitherto prevailed” (whatever that may mean) “subject to such modifications as time and circumstances may dictate, to do what may be necessary in a reasonable way to conciliate the Affghans, to watch events and deal with them as they occur,” may be what he considers “a watchful and defensive policy.” To me, I confess, it seems like implied trust in the chapter of accidents, and a determination to do nothing till Affghanistan is thoroughly Russianized. I cannot see how this can be called a safe or prudent course, or how it can be dignified with the name of a “policy.”



I am quite at a loss to understand how the Affghans are to be "conciliated" otherwise than by dealing with them as I have recommended, keeping two things especially in view as the main objects of all our action, viz. first, to impress them with a conviction of our power to defend ourselves against all comers; and, secondly, of our having no desire to annex their fertile valleys, or interfere with their independence and self-government. The first object is not difficult of attainment; the second will require time and patience, as well as much self-control and abstinence from unnecessary interference on the part of our representatives. But neither object seems to me impossible of attainment.

Whether, having got so far, "the Affghans, as a nation, would tolerate the presence of British Officers in Affghanistan, directing their politics, giving their Chiefs advice, drilling their troops and "the like," is a separate and subsequent question. If they wished for such aid, it would not be difficult nor expensive to meet their wishes. If they did not wish for it, it will be equally easy to abstain from offering it; but we should at least be in a position to know whether any and what other nation was "directing their politics and "drilling their troops;" we should know what to expect, and how to meet it, which we can hardly say we do at present.

I need not follow Lord Lawrence through his sketch of our relations with the Affghans since we evacuated their country. Whether our treatment of them was so generous as to deserve their gratitude and win their confidence, or whether it was of a very opposite character, future historians may decide. The Affghans certainly do not take the former view. I have always thought their view not unreasonable, but whether reasonable or not, the question is, how do *they* view our conduct, and what have been their feelings in consequence towards us? I fear the answer can hardly be what we should wish, if we desire that they should regard us as a very generous and magnanimous foe.

Neither will I follow Lord Lawrence now through what he says of the Punjab border policy. I may revert to the subject hereafter. For the present, I will only say that I think he will find, on inquiry, that a very considerable mitigation of the old system of Punjab border warfare has taken place of late years.

I observe in the accounts of recent expeditions constant mention of prisoners being taken. I do not recollect frequent mention of them in the earlier campaigns. There is now, in the reports of the inroads our troops made, occasional reference to discrimination in the destruction of crops and fruit trees, with a view, if possible, to confine the punishment to the property of offending individuals. The clear inference from the earlier reports is that the destruction used to be general and indiscriminate. As to the earlier frontier policy of the Punjab generally, it is, of course, defensible after a fashion, as the action of the Carlist leaders in Spain, and the French in their earlier campaigns in Algeria, may be defended; but I assert unhesitatingly that it is not defensible, either on the ordinary principles of inter-



national warfare, nor can it be excused on the ground that our troops acted as the troops of civilized Governments sometimes act in punishing rebels, for our adversaries were very rarely subjects of our own Government. The only excuses I have ever heard offered have been that of retaliation, "evil for evil," "we dealt with them as they dealt, or would have dealt, with us;" or the plea of necessity, that "it was the only way to deal with such people." In neither case can the laws of ordinary warfare be appealed to in justification. As to the success of the system, it is not necessary to quote the old description of "making a desert and calling it peace." A great Power like the Indian Government cannot persistently make war, in any fashion, on frontier tribes without breaking their strength, and gradually convincing them that it is, for the weaker side, a losing game. But all experience shows that whereas, after the conclusion of civilized warfare, a generation or two may heal the animosity of nations, ages may elapse without semi-barbarous people forgetting the smart of defeats, when no quarter was given, and when the victor signalized his triumph by the indiscriminate destruction of crops and homesteads, however humble. The temper of these frontier tribes will be to us a matter of pecuniary moment whenever we wish to have the command of the passes on the western frontier of India.

There is one specific measure referred to in my letter, the occupation of Quetta as an advanced post, to which Lord Lawrence objects, on the grounds that it will revive the jealousy of the Affghans, that it is a part of a system of further advance to Candahar and Herat, that it would thus entail vast expense, that it is an insecure military position, and involves a revision of the distribution of our troops in the Indus valley.

The question is mainly a military one. If we are morally certain that the Russians will never seek to extend their sovereign influence south or east from Herat and the north-western border of Affghanistan,—that we can never have to reckon with any enemies on the Indus, save the Affghans, with no more guns than we may choose to give them, or than they may cast for themselves, then I admit we may sleep with some sense of security in our present positions.

But if there is any risk that the Russians, having first dominated and then subdued the Usbegs and Turkomans, may establish a preponderating influence in Affghanistan, so that we may practically regard Jellalabad, Cabul, Guzni, and Candahar as Russianized outposts, then the necessity of improving our present position in the Indus valley seems to me to be dictated by the instinct of self-preservation; and I know of no move more imperative than that of securing a post above the passes which are the western gates of India, capable of being rapidly strengthened from our Indian bases of operation, and of so affording a rallying point for forces which may act on the flank of any army threatening an invasion of India from the west. If there is any other point which fulfils these conditions better than Quetta, let it be discovered and occupied without delay.

As to such a move reviving the jealousy of the Affghans, we can



make no move to which the same objection will not apply. But if the Affghans know our real views as to the occupation of their country, the occupation of Quetta will increase their confidence in our power to aid them in preserving their own independence. It is just a question as to the possibility of curing them of their belief in our having designs on their independence. Is it, or is it not, impossible to convince them of our real intentions, which we all know are not to annex their country, but to see it really independent and self-governed? If this is impossible, it certainly is the first case of the kind I have met with in Anglo-Indian history.

I do not believe any such impossibility exists, nor even a difficulty which is not of our own creation.

But, however that may be, it is surely high time we should deal in this matter with the Affghans single-handed, and come to a clear understanding with them, whether they mean confidence and identity of interests with us, or not; for our difficulties of every kind will be enormously increased if we find that another Power, Russia or Persia, can say, "our territories are now continuous with the western frontier of Affghanistan; we have the strictest relations of friendship and identity of interests with the Affghans, and you must not deal with them separately from us."

Let any one who looks at the recent progress and present position of Russia and Persia on that border say how many years or months distant may we now be from such a condition of affairs as would justify those powers in holding such language?

So with the argument that the occupation of Quetta is a part of a system of a further advance to Candahar and Herat. If the Affghans really believe that our support to them means their own independence, and that their interests are identical with ours, we may for a long time to come leave the defence of Herat and Candahar to them, with such aid as we may occasionally give in Officers or arms. But if ever they throw themselves into alliance with any other Power, or identify their policy with that of any nation but the nation ruling India, then a move on Candahar and Herat will be dictated to us by the instinct of self-preservation, and we shall bitterly rue the day when we cannot make such a move as promptly and easily as from Delhi to Peshawur. I need not say that, to any such move, the undisputed possession of at least one pass, and a good defensible position above the pass, is an essential preliminary.

I have throughout taken it for granted that, though the Affghans may be truly said to hold the keys of both India and Central Asia, yet, to a nation like the Affghans, with their five or six millions at the utmost of people, with their country open to invasion on all sides, with their distracted councils, their disordered finances, and their empty treasury, a perfectly independent position, independent alike of England, Russia, or Persia, is an utter impossibility, whenever the frontier posts of such giant Powers as Russia and England touch her frontiers. We have long felt this in our own case, and the



Affghans also have been aware that, but for our own self-restraint, our conviction that it was not for our interests to attack them, we could at any time have repeated the lesson of 40 years ago. This, of course, is no obstacle to Affghanistan being left, as regards all internal affairs, in entire independence within her own borders.

How long will it be before we recognize the fact that Russia is now, or must be within a few months, in a position as regards the North-Western Frontier of Affghanistan exactly similar to that which we occupy on the South-Eastern Frontier of that country?

In speaking of Persia, I merely regard her as a neighbour of Affghanistan, with the rights and powers of a neighbour, but necessarily acting more or less in concert with one or other of the great Western Powers.

With regard to the expense of occupying Quetta, which Lord Lawrence believes would be so great, its amount must depend on the manner on which and the time when the step is taken. Had Quetta been occupied when the step was first proposed, many years ago, its cost would have been inappreciable, and much money spent on cantonments in bad positions in India might have been saved. Even now, if the work were entrusted to a man like the present Commissioner of Sind, Sir William Merewether, who knows the country, its people, and resources very intimately, it need not cost a large sum, if time admits of the work being done gradually. But, if left to be done when the necessity is more urgent, it must be done hurriedly, and its cost, as of all work so done, will be greatly enhanced.

But whatever the cost, the real question is its necessity. If it is not really essential to a secure position, the smallest sum spent on such a move is wasted. If essential, no sum which the India exchequer can furnish can be too large for the insurance of the Empire. The question of the move to be taken, if India is seriously threatened on that frontier, is a purely military problem, to which any competent strategist can apply the most certain principles of military science. Whether such a threat of invasion is a proximate or remote probability is a political problem not difficult of solution by any one who will consider where the Russians were in Central Asia twenty years ago, where they are now, how they came there, whether they have the power, even if they had the will, to stop where they now are?

I believe they cannot stop till they come to some great natural frontier, or to a frontier where they can meet a great civilized Power with which they can deal as they deal in Europe with Germany or Austria; that if we do not meet them on the Western Frontier of Affghanistan, they must be speedily forced on to meet us on the Eastern Frontier of that country; and that our safest course is to meet them on the former, i.e. on the Western Frontier, in all friendship, with every disposition to recognize the great work they are doing for civilization and humanity in Central Asia, and to aid them by enabling them to deal with their neighbours on that frontier as a settled civilized Power.



This, it seems to me, would be a position of comparative rest and of possible peace establishments in India itself; whether its attainment will be promoted in any essential degree, or made more certain

1. Bolan.
2. *Via* Khelat.
3. *Via* Gundava.
4. *Via* Tull.

and secure, by the occupation of Quetta, with its command of the heads of at least four passes into India, is a question which strategists may determine. If it would, its attainment would be worth the difference

between peace establishments and the establishments necessary for such a condition of unrest in India as is implied in our present position on the Indus, without a single trustworthy British Agent or representative in Affghanistan, and with Russians or Russianized Agents in every frontier town, where we may any day find them.

As for the difficulties of the Bolan and other passes between Quetta and the Indus, it may be sufficient to note that, since our first advance into Affghanistan in 1838, they have never been closed to us, as the Khyber and other northern passes are closed annually.

The Bolan may frequently be unsafe for unarmed traders, whilst there is no settled Government in the country on either side of it. But, with a British post at Quetta, it may be made as secure as during our occupation of Affghanistan, when it was daily traversed by our post-runners during the whole of our worst troubles at Cabul. There are, moreover, alternative lines by other passes which would make the closing of the Bolan of comparatively small moment to a force at Quetta.

Of course the occupation of Quetta would render necessary a rearrangement of many military positions in India. But I would ask, Is not such a rearrangement urgently necessary now, whether we occupy Quetta or not? Its necessity has been constantly pressed on the Government of India by the Secretary of State of late years, and has no doubt occupied much of the attention of Lord Northbrook and his advisers. One of the greatest difficulties in the way of its speedy solution is the doubt as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government regarding the Western Frontier. If it is our intention to await the Russian advance (I do not now speak of actual invasion of India, but of the inevitable advance of Russian influence, agents, and outposts,) in our present position on that frontier, its garrisons must, of course, be on a very different scale, very much larger, and differently distributed, from what they would be with such an outpost as Quetta, with the power of at any time strengthening it from India.

Meantime I will only add that I could, at this moment, point out more than one large brigade which is now blocked up in a false position in India, whence it could not be moved in case of disturbance elsewhere, and which would more than furnish the force required for Quetta.

At the risk of repetition, but to avoid all doubt as to the course I contemplate as possible and advisable, at this moment, and with such imperfect lights as I have, regarding the confidential correspondence of Her Majesty's Government with the parties concerned, I will



recapitulate the steps which I think ought to be taken without delay :—

1. That the Viceroy should be empowered to arrange for the permanent residence of an Envoy, in such a position beyond our own frontier as may enable him to hold constant confidential intercourse with the Ruler of the country and his Ministers, and to learn the feelings of the principal Chiefs and leaders, as free from all restraints on his movement and actions as our representatives at the Courts of other Eastern potentates.
2. That the Envoy should be strictly charged to avoid all interference with the internal administration of the country, but to assure its Ruler of the cordial support and active assistance of the Indian Government in all his foreign relations, as long as he remains our cordial and faithful ally, frankly makes us parties to all his negotiations with any foreign Power, and accepts our advice in avoiding all just cause of offence to any such Power, and in adjusting all differences which may arise between him and them.
3. The Envoy should have authority to depute assistants or agents of his own to places like Herat, where it is of importance that the British Government should be represented by officers on the fidelity of whose reports implicit reliance can be placed, and who may be able, if necessary, to aid the Affghan Ruler in preventing possession of the place passing into the hands of any foreign Power.
4. That the Envoy should endeavour to obtain from the Ruler of Affghanistan such written guarantees for freedom of commerce with his dominions as shall protect our trade from all risk of exclusion from the markets of his country, and secure us against the adoption of any commercial system or tariff hostile to our interests.
5. That the Viceroy of India should be empowered to take such steps as he may find necessary to place our relations with the Khan of Kelat on the same footing on which they stood before the changes in our mode of dealing with him during the past six years, which have practically suspended the exercise of the unquestioned supremacy of the Indian Government formerly exercised, under treaty, over the affairs of Beloochistan.
6. To occupy Quetta in such force as may prevent its falling into the hands of any Power unfriendly to us, and gradually to improve its communications with our Indian frontier.

In specifying these steps I would not be understood as suggesting that they should be regarded as the heads of instruction for immediate action, but simply as a sketch of the policy which Her Majesty's Government desire to see carried out, in such manner and at such time as the Viceroy may think best; the precise steps, the time, and mode of action, as a matter of course, to be left to his discretion.



The views of Her Majesty's Government on the whole question as regards Affghanistan should, I think, be communicated to the Russian Government in much clearer and more precise form than has hitherto been done in any of the Despatches which have been made public.

I would point out that, whilst we have no desire whatever to advance our actual frontier beyond our present limits, our interests in India imperatively require that the countries beyond our immediate border should, if not actually subordinate to our authority, be in such a position of identity of interests with us as to secure us against any chance of finding any other great military Power in the possession of an influence on our frontier superior to, or antagonistic to our own.

That, regarded in this light, all the countries immediately round our border, from the Arabian Sea to the Chinese frontier,—notably Beloochistan, Affghanistan, Cashmere, Nepaul, and Thibet,—are necessarily regarded by us as bulwarks of our Indian Empire, and that our instincts of self-preservation do not allow us to see any country so placed made a party to political combinations in any sense antagonistic to our interests.

That, in the case of Affghanistan especially, we had no desire to interfere with the internal affairs of the country, but that our interests imperatively demand that a martial population, so placed, should be ruled in a sense friendly to the peace with the Government of India.

That this position makes it our interest and our duty, as guardians of peace in India, to see that the Affghans give no just cause for umbrage to their other frontier neighbours, especially to Russia or Persia. That those Powers might consequently always reckon on our hearty co-operation in removing any cause of difference between them and the Affghans, but that we cannot afford to leave the Affghans to deal single-handed with neighbours whose just demands, if not satisfied, might lead their forces down to our actual frontiers.

That to this extent we expect that any Power friendly to England will recognize the fact that we are directly interested in the preservation of the peace on the northern and western Affghan border, and will therefore make the British or Indian Government parties to any negotiations which may affect the peace on that frontier.

That this expectation implies the assurance of the cordial goodwill of the British and Indian Governments as regards any measures necessary for reducing to order the robber tribes beyond the Affghan frontier, and for rescuing the countries between the Affghan and the Russian or Persian frontiers from their present state of chronic anarchy and misrule.

H. B. E. FRERE.

11th January, 1875.







## IV.—EXTRACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SIND FRONTIER SYSTEM.

The following account of the leading features of the Sind Frontier policy, as introduced by the late General John Jacob, under the Government of Sir Charles Napier, and acted on during the time I was in charge of our political relations on that frontier, is extracted from a Memorandum drawn up by me in March, 1876 :—

“ 1. In Sind it was a cardinal rule to attempt no disintegration of the Khan of Khelat's sovereignty, whether nominal or real, over the Belooch tribes; but rather by every means in our power to uphold his authority. Complainants below the rank of chiefs, small or great, were told to apply to their chiefs. Chiefs, or complainants against chiefs, were referred to the Khan. Every effort was made to enable or induce the Khan to give redress, and to keep his people in order. The Khan was regarded as our independent ally, free to act as he pleased in internal affairs, but under military subordination to the English Government in all that could affect anything beyond his own border.

“ 2. In Sind it was our main object to concentrate all power and responsibility, civil as well as military, in the hands of the frontier Commandant and Political Superintendent. He commanded all troops on the frontier, whether local or belonging to the regular army. In his military capacity he was responsible to no one but the Commander-in-Chief and Government. He was also sole Political Agent and Superintendent of Police, Chief Magistrate, Judge, and Engineer, fiscal officer, and canal officer of a strip of territory of various width from 10 to 50 miles on the frontier of Cutchee. He had assistants to aid him in the several departments, but he had no superior except the Commissioner, who ruled the whole province, and through whom he corresponded with Government.

“ 3. In Sind the force employed on the frontier was special in discipline and equipment, local as regarded the scene of its ordinary service, but its discipline was under the general control of the Commander-in-Chief, and the force formed an integral part of the army under his command.

“ From the excellence of the original constitution of the troops, from their officers being well selected, and from constant practice, they were among the best in the army.

“ 4. The principle laid down for our dealings with the frontier tribes in Sind was to be actively good neighbours to them, ‘to do as we would be done by,’ not to meddle or to interfere across the border with what did not concern us, but to regard the good or bad fortune or conduct of our neighbours as matters of intimate concern to us; ‘not to let his house burn lest ours should burn also’; to help the Khan's authority; not to supersede it, but to allow nothing to go unnoticed within reach of our outposts if the evil threatened to involve our people. Active interference by using our troops was



only permitted in case of overt acts of outrage by armed men, such as no local police could cope with—cattle-lifting by armed bands and the like. In all such cases our troops acted at once as against a civilized enemy in the field, pursued and attacked, without reference to border; because, if on our side, they were armed enemies of the British Government; if, on the other side, they were armed enemies of our ally the Khan.

“Prisoners made in the latter case were handed over to the Khan for disposal.

“5. In Sind the limit of our active interference across the border was a purely military limit. The Commandant was charged to use his troops for the protection of life and property of all peaceable people against all armed evil-doers, not only in our own territory, but in that of our ally, ‘within our reach.’ This was defined in a military sense. Our troops were never to move without proper supports and reserves, never to enter on ground where they could not act with efficiency, thus excluding the cavalry from attempts to enter the hills without supports of infantry or guns.

“But of all this the Frontier Commandant was the sole judge, in the first instance responsible through the Commissioner in Sind to Government, and to the Commander-in-Chief direct.

“6. When following up an enemy across the Sind border beyond British territory, the ordinary rules of war in civilized countries were ordered to be strictly observed; armed men resisting were to be attacked and defeated, made prisoners, or slain; unresisting or unarmed men were to be everywhere spared and protected; no plunder was permitted; no wanton destruction of houses, trees, crops, or other property was allowed; provisions taken from unarmed country people were to be duly paid for.

“The object aimed at was the individual punishment of the evil-doer, not the punishment of his tribe or family. Punishment of the culprit’s clansmen, with a view by coercing the innocent to reach the guilty, was not allowed.

“7. In Sind no notice was taken of tribal ties or local custom as excuses for offences against British law. Private warfare and private reprisals by cattle-lifting, &c., were forbidden. The excuse of “custom” in such case was ignored or treated as an aggravation of the offence, inasmuch as it was a proof of premeditation. In the strongest case of all—i.e., blood-feuds, &c., the tribes were made to understand that the prosecution of a feud was not permitted by our Government; no allowance was made for the excuse that the murder or robbery would have been venial or permissible under the Native Government. No favour was shown to men who, according to our ideas, were malefactors.

“8. Crime being treated, not as a private wrong, but as a public offence, and the protection of persons and property from open armed violence being undertaken by the State, it was not necessary in Sind for every one to carry arms. None but soldiers and servants of Government were allowed to go armed; all others were required to



leave their arms at home, or to give them up at the first police post in British territory.

"9. Every aid in Sind was given to the Khan's Officers and subjects to obtain redress for injuries inflicted in Khelat territory or on Khelat subjects, by our people. It was a point of honour to mete out to the Khan and his people the same measure that we exacted from them.

"We dealt with Khelat as far as possible as we would with Belgium or Switzerland.

"10. The result in Sind was, after a very few years, entire freedom of the frontier districts from raids and perfect security of life and property within our border during the nine years I knew the frontier up to 1859-60. The Bolan Pass and other trade-routes were open and secure for travellers; there was greater general security within the Khan's territory than had been known for ages. The Khan and all his people were obedient to every demand of the British Government. British officers used to go habitually to the Khan's upper districts, Quetta, &c., and stay there for weeks together during the hot weather, hunting or shooting in the hills, and everywhere received as welcome guests, and they traversed all parts of the Khelat territory up to the Persian frontier with merely honorary escorts of British sowars. The Murrees were the only exception to this description. They were partially supported in an independent position by being partly within the Punjab frontier jurisdiction, and by the refusal of the Government of India to allow them to be brought to order by an expedition to put down their marauding.

"Even this, however, had been effected by the Khan, acting under the advice of Colonels Merewether and Henry and Malcolm Green; and shortly before I left Sind in 1859, he had occupied the Murree capital and there received the submission of the Murree Chiefs. I append a copy of their report, as it throws very important light on the general question of frontier defence and management.

"*General remarks.*—I have heard it objected to the Sind system, that the union of so many duties—military and civil, political, revenue, judicial, &c.—in the hands of one military Commandant, requires a combination of talent not often found in any single Officer.

"There is, of course, some truth in this. It is contrary to our policy in old settled provinces in the interior. The several duties would, separately considered, be each better performed by separate officials; but the combination of authority in one military Officer's hands has advantages which seem to me to outweigh all objections. The Frontier Commandant had expert assistants under him, who devoted special attention to their special branches; and, however imperfectly any separate department might be conducted, there could be no doubt it was always better administered than under any Native Government, sometimes better than in our oldest provinces. In general efficiency, simplicity, and economy, there can be no doubt of the excellence of the old Sind system." *crosoft* ®



The following were the concluding paragraphs of the Memorandum :—

“I have always been in favour of uniting Sind to the Punjab, so as to have one government from Cashmere to the sea, but I should regard any abandonment of the distinctive features of the Sind frontier system as too high a price to pay for any such advantage of unity of administration along the whole line of the Indus.

“Nor does it seem to me to be the least necessary. The distinctive features in the Sind system to which I attach most importance are,—

“1. It was a *military* system. Military defence and security were the first objects.

“2. It was a *neighbourly* system, and made the Khan and his tribes not only glad to have us as neighbours, but anxious to be submissive and obedient neighbours to us.

“3. *Authority was undivided* on both sides the border.

“4. *It was in accordance with civilized usages*, in war as well as in peace.

“That it was also simpler, and perfectly intelligible and defensible according to European ideas, that it was economical as well as efficacious, were additional advantages.

“But there is nothing whatever to prevent its being worked as well from Lahore as it ever was from Bombay; and if the Punjab frontier Officers would candidly examine it, I am not without hope that they would find much to approve, and something, perhaps, to adopt.

“For instance, would our position at Peshawar, or anywhere else on the Punjab frontier, be less strong, if, instead of the present multitude of independent departments and commands, there were only one chief, as Military Commandant and Viceroy's agent?

“Or, if he had authority to deal with the Amir and the frontier tribes, so as to establish the best possible neighbourly relations with them, helping them if they wanted help, punishing them severely if they insulted, annoyed, or thwarted us, and using, for the purpose of such punishment, whatever force might be necessary to convince rude and arrogant men that we were far stronger than they were, and were not to be insulted, annoyed, or thwarted with impunity, but that, if our neighbours behaved well to us, we behaved well to our neighbours?

“I cannot but think that any of our great frontier Commanders would feel his hands much strengthened if he were told that he had the confidence of Government, and that his instructions were to act on the above principles; that between the Indus and the mountains he was supreme, and that he was to deal with his neighbours over the border as England deals with Greece, not as France deals with Algerian Arabs.”





















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